John Gibbs his Book

Licensed,

October the 5*th*. 1688.

Rob. Midgley.

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Rapin, R.

THE Modest Critick: OR REMARKS Upon the most Eminent HISTORIANS, Antient and Modern.

With Useful Cautions and Instructions, as well for Writing, as Reading

HISTORY:

Wherein the Sense of the Greatest Men on this Subject is faithfully Abridged.

By one of the Society of the Port-Royal.

LONDON:
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THE PREFACE.

IT is as unuſual for a Book to be Publiſh'd without a *Preface*, as for a man to go abroad without a Cravat: Something therefore muſt be ſaid, for Faſhion ſake: But, becauſe I am no way addicted to Garb and

Dreſs, what I ſay ſhall be plain and ſhort.

I have liv'd long enough in the World, to know, that a man who ventures to make any Work of his own Publick, puts himſelf into Extream Danger of being attack'd on every ſide, and by all ſort of People, as well Learned as Ignorant; and theſe are the worſt of the two; for a reaſonable man may be ſa-

ſatisfied with Reaſon, when a Fool will never be convinc'd of his Error. This has always made me unwilling to expoſe any thing of my own: But, having receiv'd, in the peruſing of this little Book, both Pleaſure and Profit, I thought it would be but matter of Gratitude in me, to communicate it to the Publick.

The Press having of late been prostituted to the Dull and Impertinent; it will be no great Credit for me to run in the Herd, much less to bring up the Rear of them that are in Print.

It is not therefore from Vanity, or the fond imagination of raising a Character, that I send this little Treatise abroad; but meerly, that others, who have

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the ſame Notions with my ſelf, may receive from it the ſame ſatisfaction that I have done.

It is not now, as heretofore, when he that could write, or read his Name, was thought therefore fit to be a *Pariſh-Clerk*: *Fortunatus*, and *Valentine* and *Orſon*, &c. are no longer the Entertainment of Men. Nay, ſo ripe and pretending is the preſent Age, that

Wo-

Women pass their time in the best and solidest Histories.

But tho many read, yet all do not read with Judgment and Observation. Therefore they may learn in reading this Book, instructions how to read and write too.

Now to do my self some Right, I must ingeniously confess, there are some Passages, about which I am not fully satisfied, as about the *Spartiates*

tiates and *Lacedemonians*, tho' the Author has *Polybius* on his ſide.

He has not done juſtice to the World, in not mentioning ſome late Hiſtorians; I mean, amongſt the reſt, *Thuanus* and *Sleidan*, who deſerve not to be paſs'd over in ſilence.

It is not to be wondred, that one of the *Romiſh Church* ſhould ſo ſharply cenſure the incomparable *Fra Paolo*,

lo, whose *Judgment* and *Learning* carried him beyond their Arguments, and whose Honesty was above their Calumny: But the History of the *Council of Trent* is sufficient to maintain that Author's Credit against all their Suggestions.

As for the *King* of *France*'s busying himself about the Translating of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, I must beg the Au-

Author's Pardon, if I cannot believe him, That *Monarch* having buſineſs enough of his own, without medling with *Books*. And, I am confident, had He never done more than *Tranſlating* of that Book, He had never had the Name of *Louis Le Grand.*

But, for theſe, and other ſuch Faults, I will leave every Reader to take the ſame Liberty towards him that he has

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taken with others. To ſay the Truth, He that ſets up for a *Critick*, offers a Challenge to the whole World: Therefore, not to be remark'd upon, is the laſt Affront that can be put upon him. But I forget the Complaint I made of other Peoples ſcribling, while I thus far continue my own. *Reader*, accept this with the ſame Mind that I offer it; And ſo *Farewel.*

TO

TO THE READER.

I *Have neither ſo good an Opinion of this* Work, *nor of my ſelf, as to prefix my* Name *to it; it being but a rough Draught of the* Manner *of writing* Hiſtory; *and that made upon a curſory reading of* Hiſtory. *A Natural Diffidence I have of my ſelf, makes me fear, leſt* Impatience *or* Precipitation *has ſnatch'd out*

out of my hands what could ne-ver remain too long with me, to render it ſelf any way ſupporta-ble. But that I may not diſguſt the Publick *too much, by repre-ſenting the* Preſent *I here make it,* too mean *and* cheap: *I ſhall ingenuouſly confeſs, That this Work is a kind of* Abridg-ment *of what has been* written *on that* Subject, *by the great-eſt Men of the firſt, and of the late Ages; That it is an* Ex-tract *of what is moſt reaſonable in* Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæ-us, *in his Anſwer to* Pompey, *who ask'd his Opinion of the* Greek Hiſtorians, *and his* Cenſure *upon their* different Characters: *That it is a*

Copy

Copy *of what* Lucian *has thought moſt judicious in that Admirable Treatiſe he made of* the Manner of Writing HISTORY. *In fine, That thoſe* Opinions *I give in this* Diſcourſe, *are not ſo much my own, as thoſe of* Franceſco Patrici, *in his* Dialogues *of* Gyrolamo Marucci, Agoſtino Maſcardi, *of* Paolo Beni, Lewis Cabrera, *and others,* Spaniſh *and* Italian Moderns, *which have handled this Argument.*

But, as perhaps, I have ſpoil'd their Thoughts by adding my own, I declare, That I do not make it a Point of

Honour to my ſelf, to perſwade my Readers of it. (a) *I do not impoſe Laws upon them, having neither Juriſdiction nor Authority to do ſo; they are, at the moſt, but* Advices, *which every one may follow at his* own Diſcretion: *But, being far from pretending to* inſtruct *any body, by a Title which ſhall ſeem vain to* Modeſt Perſons, *I would willingly have all the World believe, that I am* proud *of receiving* any Inſtruction *from others. For, if I have* not Wit *and* Learning *ſufficient, to be as* Exact *as ſo* Important a Deſign *requires; I have* Judgement *enough*

(a) Cum judicium meum oſtendere, ſuam legentibus relinquam. *Fab.* l. 9. c. 4.

enough to be fearful of my ſelf. But, that I may not take a False Modeſty *upon me, by ſuppreſſing my* Name, *I confeſs, that, in a manner, I conceal my ſelf out of Pride: For I am too proud to ſhew my ſelf, being ſenſible, that in an Age ſo* Learned, *and ſo full of* Criticks, *as ours is, a Man humbles himſelf, whenever he takes up the* Name *of an* Author. *In effect, their* Rigour *is ſo great, that no* Merit, *how well ſoever eſtabliſhed, can eſcape them; And it looks like a kind of* Preſumption *in a Man, to commit himſelf openly to the* Judgement *of*

the Publick, *which daily becomes more rigorous; and in an Age where* Cenſure *ſpares no body. It is alſo true, That there is ſo great a* Wiſdom *in not endeavouring to ſeem* capable; *and that there is ſo much* good Senſe *ſhew'd in being* Modeſt, *that I could willingly have choſen to add, in thoſe places where I give my* Opinion, *the* May be *of* Ariſtotle, *and the* It ſeems *of* Tully, *to be* leſs Affirmative, *and to ſpeak my Mind with* more Modeſty, *could that have ſuited with the* Simplicity *I uſe to explain my ſelf. For, if a Man*

Man has any Measure of Sense, *he will hardly give his* Opinion, *in an Age so over-run with* Positiveness *in all things, as ours is; and then, Wo be to him that offers to decide.*

Therefore this Discourse *upon* History *is no ways like that of* Lucian's, *who praises good* Writers *only to detract from those that* write ill; *hiding, under the* Approbation *which he gives to* Good Authors, *a cunning* Satyr, *the more to involve the* bad ones: *That is not my* Design, *having no Grudge against any Man. I pretend only to open sensible Author's*

Eyes,

Eyes, and ſhew them, that they ought to tremble when they go about writing Hiſtory, *which is ſo hard a thing to do well; and that the Judgment of* Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus *alone upon* Thucydides, *ought to caſt a Terror in all* Hiſtorian's *Minds that are wiſe. In fine, to ſpeak one Word about this* Work, *after I have ſpoken of the* Workman, *I declare, that* good ſenſe *alone reigns more in thoſe* Inſtructions, *than the* Fineſſes *of* Policy; *which is the thing curious men look moſt for in* Hiſtory, Policy *being the* Vaineſt *of all* Sciences; *and that,* good Senſe,

is

is the moſt univerſal *and* ſolid ground *thereof. The Truth is, That I do not pretend to ſay all upon that matter, which no man can do: I ſhall, perhaps, ſay more another time, if this be kindly receiv'd.*

THE

THE
Modeſt Critick:
OR,
REMARKS
Upon the moſt Eminent
HISTORIANS.

THE Palate of this Age, it ſeems, grows very exquiſite; for in all things, for the moſt part, we attain a good meaſure of Senſe: We eſteem that which is Real and Solid, and we can hardly now endure any thing that is falſe or frivolous. This is the Sentiment of all reaſonable People, who make the ſoundeſt part of them that pretend to judge, thô it be perhaps the leſſer in number. *The Deſign of the Author.*

But nothing ſhews that ripeneſs of Judgment better than the Diſguſt People have now for *Romances*, and any other thing that looks like them; ſo that this love of Truth and Reaſon, being a diſpoſition to love *Hiſtory*, let us make uſe of ſo favourable a Conjuncture, to ſerve the Publick according to their Genius; let us beſtow our pains in thoſe things that can make us perfect in that Art; and comprehending the excellence thereof, let us make our ſelves acquainted with thoſe things that are needful to attain it: For, what Spirit is not requiſite for it? and what can we imagine finer than (*b*) *Hiſtory*, which can do juſtice to *Virtue*, by perpetuating the Memory of Noble Actions? This is, in my mind, what can contribute to the Perfection, of which this kind of writing is capable, which will carry it above all other (if that love for *Senſe* which eſtabliſhes it ſelf can but continue) in deſpite of the variety of taſts, which fancy and vanity endeavour from time

(*b*) Pulchrum imprimis videtur, non pati occidere, quibus æternitas debeatur. *Pl. l. 5. Epiſt.*

to time to introduce thrô falſe Ideas of fine wit.

I.

There is nothing harder than to ſay very preciſely which is the beſt way of writing Hiſtory. Every one ought to follow that which he finds moſt in Uſe in the Age wherein he writes, and that which is moſt conformable to thoſe Peoples taſte to whom he writes. But, is this enough to pleaſe Poſterity? It is a Judge ſtrict, ſevere, incorruptible, who gives its approbation to true Merit only: let us ſee then what we ſhall do to obtain its ſuffrage. When a man writes Nobly, Senſibly, Purely, Naturally; he pleaſes always in what Language ſoever he writes. Thoſe are the univerſal Principles, which alone can fit every People's palate: for there are no other general Rules in the World, than thoſe of Reaſon and good Senſe. That is the reaſon why *Thucidides*, *Xenophon*,

How to write Hiſtory.

phon, *Saluſt*, *Cæſar*, *Livy*, *Buchanan*, *Mariana*, and others like them, have always pleas'd, though they wrote in Ages, and to Nations of a different genius: a man is ſure to pleaſe, if he writes as they have writ. For, what Grandeur, what Judgment, what Clearneſs, and above all, what Integrity ſhines in thoſe great men's Works!

II.

What to write nobly is.

You muſt then reſolve to write nobly, if you deſign to write *Hiſtory*. For, (c) from the moment you ſpeak to all the world, and to all Ages, you are endued with a Character which gives you authority to raiſe your voice, becauſe then you ſpeak to *Kings*, *Princes*, and to the *Grandees* of all *Countries* and of all *Ages*; and you become, in ſome manner, the Maſter and Inſtructer of all mankind: (d) Nothing, then, is more eſſential to *Hiſtory*, than to adorn your

(c) Genus hoc ſcribendi incitatum atque elatum eſſe debere quis ignorat? *Cic. ad Famil. Epiſt. 7. l. 6.*

(d) Addidit Hiſtoriæ majorem ſonum vocis Antipater, cæteri non exornatores rerum, ſed tantummodo narratores fuerunt. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

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diſcourſe with a lofty ſtrain, to ſpeak as you ought. As an Hiſtorian quits the low and common Language, that ſo by the dignity of his Expreſſion, he may anſwer the merit of thoſe things he has to ſay: let him uſe himſelf to think nobly, in every thing that paſſes through his mind: let him ſtudy to give good weight to his thoughts, and ſtrength to his diſcourſe, by ſeeking with care all that can elevate and enoble it, to give a mark of greatneſs to all that he ſays. The Patterns of that kind of writing, are, amongſt the *Greeks Thucydides*, and *Livy* amongſt the *Latins*. They are almoſt the only ones that have been able to keep up with an equal force and vigour, that greatneſs of Style, without ſinking in *Mediocrity* and *Lowneſs*: and in that they have had but few Imitators. *Herodotus* has, by imitating *Homer* too much, tryed to raiſe his Style in places that requir'd elevation, as *Longinus* has taken notice. *Tacitus*, who for the moſt

part is only great, becauſe he is ſhort, is not a very good model to propoſe, for the greatneſs of his Style is not natural at all. In ſhort, you muſt take great care to diſtinguiſh a falſe greatneſs from the true one. For, it is not in high terms, nor in lofty expreſſions; it is not in the puffing of words, nor haughtineſs of the Diſcourſe, that that nobleneſs of Style which *Hiſtory* requires, ought to conſiſt; in which *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, and moſt part of the *Hiſtorians* of the low *Empire* have been deceived: It is in a high, but modeſt Expreſſion; in a Diſcourſe capable of ſuſtaining the greateſt matters and raiſing the leaſt; It is, in fine, in that temper of greatneſs, which *Quintillian* attributes to true *Eloquence*. It is not enough for you to have Wit, (e) you muſt have a genius to write ſo, and to elevate what you ſay, by the choice of *Expreſſions*, and by the greatneſs of your *thoughts*. That gift is ſo rare, that if you ſeparate from the number of *Hiſto-*

(e) Magna, non nimia, ſublimis non abrupta, fortis non temeraria, ſevera non triſtis, gravis non tarda, lata non luxurioſa, plena non tumida. *Fab. l.* 12. *c.* 10.

ſtorians, thoſe that have not writ ſo, there will be but few true ones that will remain.

III.

To write ſenſibly, is to hit directly the thing you aim at, in what kind ſoever you write, without going from your Subject, or loſing time by the way: It is to expreſs things with a kind of *Wiſdom* and *Modeſty*, not abandoning your ſelf to the heat of your *Imagination*, nor to the quickneſs of your *Apprehenſion*; that is, when you can ſuppreſs that which is ſuperfluous in the Expreſſion, as thoſe *Adverbs* and *Epithets* which diminiſh things, as they expreſs them; to let no *idle*, *inſipid*, and uſeleſs thing remain in it: to cut off handſomly, what is not fit to be ſaid, how fine ſoever it appears; to allow ever leſs to fineneſs, than to Solidity; not to ſhew Paſſion or Heat, where only cold Blood and Serioufneſs are requir'd; to examin *To write ſenſibly.*

min all your thoughts, (f) and meaſure all your words, with that exactneſs of ſenſe, and that exquiſite Judgment, which nothing eſcapes, but what is exact and judicious. It is, in fine, to have Strength enough to reſiſt the temptation Men have naturally to ſhew their Wit; (g) as that Impertinent *Hiſtorian*, who in the *Parthian* overthrow by the *Emperour Severus*, makes *Oſroes* fly in a Den ſhaded with *Lawrels* and *Myrtle*, wherein he makes himſelf ridiculous, thinking to be more agreeable, which is the moſt ſlippery ſtep an Author can fall upon. And that Spirit endued with Senſe, that wiſe Character which Hiſtory requires, is a kind of attendance upon ones ſelf, which allows it ſelf no manner of Exaggeration, and which takes endleſs Precautions againſt thoſe bold Imaginations; which thoſe, whoſe Spirits are too quick or too fertile, are ſubject to; that they may ſay few things in few words, as *Saluſt* does, who holds *Councils*, gives *Battels*, takes

(f) Delectus Verborum habendus, & pondera ſingulorum examinanda. *Fab. l.* 10. *c.* 3.

(g) *Luc.* de conſer. Hiſt.

takes *Towns*, conquers *Kingdomes*, with a compendiouſneſs of *Diſcourſe*, and an overflowing *Expreſſion*, which is underſtood at half Sentences. *Tacitus* has all the Senſe neceſſary to be ſhort; but he has not enough on't to be underſtood. The *Readers* grow ſometimes impatient in that Author's Precipitations, which loſes much of his agreeableneſs, and trying to compact in too few words, that which ſhould have been more extended, falls into Obſcurity. The deſire he has of being too ſhort, angers me, becauſe of the ſmall Inſtructions he gives me in things, which he does not unfold enough. *Polybius* and *Appian* ſometimes ſay too much; there is a ſort of judicious ſilence, which makes one comprehend often the greatneſs of the things one ſpeaks of, better than any words, when they are too weak. It is a Maſter-piece for one to ſuppreſs thoſe things he cannot well ſay; and the great Diſcretion in an *Hiſtorian*, is to make a diſtinction of what muſt be

be extended, or made ſhort, that ſo he may give to every thing the juſt meaſure it ought to have, to make it acceptable. For *Livy*, thô very large, is not tedious, becauſe he is a Man of Judgment, even in his very Prolixity. But *Thucydides*, by ſticking too cloſe to Senſe, ſometimes falls in a kind of hardneſs and dryneſs, which one would hardly forgive him, was it not for the pureneſs and nobleneſs of his Style. So difficult it is to write very ſenſibly, without loſing ſomewhat of the agreeableneſs which one might employ, if he had a leſſer Wit. But let an Author imprint well in his Mind, that the greateſt Ornament of his Work, is always good Senſe; all the reſt wearies one, but Senſe never tires. 'Twas the good Senſe of *Philip de Comines*, made him juſtly deſerve the eſteem and approbation of our Age, in deſpight of the bad and ill-digeſted Language he wrote in. But of all Modern *Hiſtorians*, none has written more ſenſibly than *Mariana* in his Hiſto-

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ry of *Spain*. It is the Maſter-piece of the laſt Ages for that quality alone. In all that Work a Genius appears, which keeps him always from neglecting himſelf in choice Points, and from abandoning himſelf in thoſe that are not ſo. And this judicious equality, which that Author always obſerves, thô the matters he treats of be never ſo unequal, is little known to our late *Hiſtorians*. But the Art of thinking ſenſibly of things, is not ſufficient, unleſs he has alſo that of expreſſing them purely.

IV.

To write purely.

An *Hiſtorian*, who thinks to commend his Book to future Ages, muſt think of (*b*) writing purely. Without that advantage, an *Hiſtorian* will be but ſhort liv'd. For want of (*i*) purity of Style, ſo many *Greek* and *Latin Hiſtorians*, of whom *Photius*, and the other Library-keepers, have made mention, have periſh'd in the general ſhipwrack of ſo many Books; and

(*b*) Hiſtorico ſermoni decus conciliet, perſpicuitas, proprietaſque verborum. *Beni. lib. 2. de Hiſtor.*

(*i*) Quid tam neceſſarium quam recta locutio? *Fab. l. 1.*

and that, of a number almoſt infinite, of whom (k) *Voſſius* ſpeaks, none remain, but thoſe that have writ reaſonably enough to deſerve to be read. You muſt not then pretend to write *Hiſtory*, unleſs you very well know the Language you intend to write in, and, except you write purely. For, as ſoon as your deſign is to inſtruct, you ought to think how to expreſs your ſelf neatly, that you may be underſtood; for when a man ſpeaks well, every one is willing to hear him: beſides, one that ſpeaks ill, never ſpeaks any thing right; (l) and that clearneſs, which is the greateſt charm in *Hiſtory*, can only be found in a pure Style. That purity conſiſts chiefly in the propriety of words; in the natural ordering of the phraſes, and in the wiſe and moderate uſe of figures. The ſtyle ought not to have any thing (m) improper, ſtrange, bold, hard, creeping nor obſcure. *Herodotus* has that purity

(k) Cura magna ſentiendi & loquendi, ſed diſſimulatio curæ præcipua. *l.* 9. *c.* 4.

(l) Nihil eſt in Hiſtoria, pura & illuſtri brevitate dulcius. *Cic. in Brut.*

(m) In Sententia nihil abſurdum, aut alienum, aut ſubinſulſum; in verbis nihil inquinatum, abjectum, non aptum, durum, longe petitum, *Cic. de opt. gen. orat.*

of

of ſtyle, and has excelled in it, above all other *Grecians*, as *Cæſar* above all the *Latins*. The Wits of the following Ages grew ruſty, and retain'd little of the purity of the *Ancients*. But *Quintus Curtius*, thinking to appear more poliſh'd, has loſt ſomewhat of that great and majeſtick grace, which becomes *Saluſt* and *Livy* ſo well. It is true that he flouriſhes ſome places too much; as for example, the Deſcription of the River *Marſyas*, in the beginning of the third Book; The Adventure of *Abdolonymus*, who, from a Gardiner, became King, in the fourth Book: Of the ſiege of *Tyre*, and of a great many others, where it appears an affectation of *Eloquence* a little becomming the Gravity of *Hiſtory*, which can bear nothing that is affected. Indeed, that purity of Elocution ſo neceſſary to *Hiſtory*, ought to be ſupported by a great deal of Senſe. For, nothing is more fulſome than *Eloquence*, when empty of things, and which ſays nothing. It happens

(*n*) Non debet quiſquam ubi maxima rerum momenta verſantur, ſollicitus eſſe de verbis, *Fab. l. 8. c. 3.* Ut monilibus & margaritis quæ ſunt Ornamenta Fœminarum, deformantur Viri, nec habitus triumphalis quo nihil auguſtius, fœminas decet, *Fab. l. 11. c. 1.*

(*n*) Ornatus omnis non tam ſua, quam rei cui adhibetur conditione conſtat. *ibid.*

pens that, ſometimes, purity of Diſcourſe too much ſtudied in great Subjects, diminiſhes its greatneſs; as it appears in the Hiſtory of the *Indies* by *Maffæus*, and in the wars of *Flanders* by *Cardinal Bentivoglio.* The one and the other have ſtudied too much how to pleaſe by the Politeneſs of the diſcourſe, not remembring, that Beautys that are ſprucely attir'd ſmite leaſt, and that the fineſt ornaments diſguiſe a thing, whenſoever they are exceſſive and diſproportionate.

V.

To write with Simplicity.

You are alſo obliged to write with ſimplicity, to avoid that Pompous and that affected Air, which are both ſo contrary to that Character which is requir'd in *Hiſtory*: becauſe, whatſoever is great, ceaſes to be ſo as ſoon as it is ſtrip'd of that ſimplicity; and that which is pure and great too, receives an acceſſion of greatneſs, and becomes lofty. (o) Nothing alſo inſtructs,

(o) Si oratio perderet gratiam ſimplicis & inaffectati coloris, perderet & fidem. *Fab. l. 9. c. 4.*

ſtructs, and gets the publick applauſe, more than that ſimplicity of Style, ſo beloved of the Ancients, and ſo little known by the Moderns. All that which is exaggerated, ſeems falſe; and Nature, which you ought to have for your object, delights not in impertinent flouriſhes. But that you may exactly underſtand that ſimplicity which is ſo neceſſary to a great Style; you muſt conſider that there are three ſorts of it; A ſimplicity in words, as that of *Cæſar*; a ſimplicity in the Thoughts, as that of *Saluſt*, a ſimplicity in the Deſign, as that of *Thucydides*, ſo much valued by (*p*) *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus*.

(*p*) In judicio de *Thucydide*.

The *Moderns*, which have come the neareſt to that Character, are, amongſt the *French*, *Phillip de Commines*; *Guichardin* amongſt the *Italians*, *Buchanan* in *Scotland*, *Mariana* amongſt the *Spaniards*; the greateſt part of the reſt, ſeek only to maintain themſelves by the Purity, Politeneſs, and other Ornaments of Diſcourſe, when they have

have not a Spirit great enough to attain that ſimplicity; and they diſguiſe the Truth, when they want ſtrength to ſhew it naked. Happy is the Man that can attain it, when he makes writing his Buſineſs; thoſe that are ignorant may underſtand it, at the ſame time that the intelligent are charm'd with it. But nothing is harder to get, than that plain and natural way, which makes the ſimplicity of the Style. A Genius extraordinary is requir'd to expreſs things clearly, without dropping into a low and cold ſtyle. For at the ſame time that you endeavour after ſimplicity, you ought to dread nothing more than flatneſs: What is then, that admirable ſimplicity, which is the higheſt perfection of a great work, and wherein do's it conſiſt? (q) It is to make uſe only of the moſt common and fitteſt words, but they muſt always be full of a great ſenſe, as that Prince do's, to whom *Homer* gives

(q) *Homerus* brevem quidem cum animi jucunditate, propriam, carentem ſuperfluis eloquentiam *Menelao* dedit, quæ ſunt virtutes generis primi. *Fab. l.* 12. *c.* 10.

a brief

a brief Eloquence, agreeable, proper, without ſuperfluity. (r) It is to think and ſpeak juſt what you have to ſay and to think, without giving too much quickneſs to your expreſſion, as *Strada* do's; and without giving too great a brightneſs to your thoughts, as *Grotius* did. It is to have your Sentiments ordinary and natural, not making ſo many Arguments and Reflections, as *Davila* in his *Hiſtory* of the Troubles: for as ſoon as you argue ſo much, it is no more Nature that ſpeak's, 'tis Art and Study: and thoſe diſcourſes ſo labour'd, ſmell of the Schools. (s) It is not to mix more Ornament in your diſcourſe than the modeſty of the truth can bear. It is to expreſs that natural and free air of (t) *Xenophon*, which no imaginable affectation can attain. It is, in fine, to poſſeſs that marvellous talent of paring off the ſuperfluous part of the Diſcourſe, of which *Phocian* was ſo excellent a maſter; of whom, ſimple as he was, *Demoſthenes* was wont to ſay, when he ſaw him aſcend

(r) Exponere ſimpliciter ſine ulla Exornatione *Cic. l. 2. de Invent.*

(s) Non dicere ornatius quam ſimplex ratio veritatis ferat. *Cic. l. 1. de Orat.*

(t) *Xenophontis* illam ſucunditatem inaffectatam, quam nulla affectatio conſequi poſſit, uptæ ſermonen Gratiæ finxiſſe videantur. *Fab. l. 10. c. 1.*

the Tribunal, as his Antagoniſt,
(u) *Plutarch.* (u) *Here's the ſword which is going to cut off all the ſuperfluity of my words.* That you may well eſtabliſh that Character, which, beſides a great ſtore of Wiſdom and good Senſe, requires much exerciſe and a great deal of Meditation; you muſt avoid the uſe of thoſe Authors whoſe imagination is too full, that you may not fall in that torrent of falſe thoughts, boundleſs expreſſions, and thoſe confuſions which have but a glance of good ſenſe, into which you will eaſily fall, if you have not an exact Senſe, and an equal Spirit. You muſt propoſe to your ſelf no other rule of that manner of writing, but the *Ancients*. And, among thoſe, you muſt make choice of them which
(x) *Hermog. l. 2. de Ideis.* have moſt of this ſimplicity. (x) *Hermogenes* propounds *Theocritus* and *Anacreon* for great Patterns of it: and indeed nothing is opener and freer than what they have writ. *Herodotus* ſeems to *Longinus* too bold. *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* finds, that *Thucydides*, thô a great Maſter

of

of that Simplicity, loads ſome of his Relations with too much of the matter of fact. *Xenophon* and *Polybius* moralize too much, and often hinder the ſtream of *Hiſtory* by their Reflections. *Diodorus Siculus* mixes too much Learning in his Diſcourſes. *Plutarch* may go for a great original of that ſimplicity we look after: for every thing he ſays reliſhes of it. *Livy* ſeems not to me more agreeable by all his other great qualities than by that. The ſtream of his *Hiſtory* is like that of a great River which floweth majeſtically, as that of *Tacitus* reſembles a deep and ſwelling River, ſubject to overflowings: he never keeps a tenour in his thoughts, but often is immoderate in his expreſſions for want of this ſimplicity. *Mariana* is one of the moſt accompliſh't among the modern *Hiſtorians*, becauſe he regards it moſt. For the ſimplicity of Style cannot be found in great Subjects, without being accompanied with greatneſs and noblenes. Thoſe are the qualities from

whence that firſt ground which *Hiſtory* requires ariſe, and which we may, in a manner, call the firſt Elements of that beauty which it muſt have, and which ought to reign more in the mind, and in all the Character of the *Hiſtorian*, than in his Style and in his Diſcourſe. Here are the other qualities which muſt be added to him to make him perfect, which I touch ſuccinctly, without any other order, than that in which they preſent themſelves to my mind. I begin with the *Matter* and the *Form*; that is to ſay, with that which is moſt eſſential to *Hiſtory*.

VI.

The Matter in Hiſtory.

The Matter fit to exerciſe the Art of an *Hiſtorian* is a vaſt field, ſince it extends it ſelf to all the Actions of men, *viz.* Peace, War, Councils, Negotiations, Ambaſſies, Intrigues, and all the ſeveral Adventures which may happen in this life. (y) *Cicero* requires two qualities

(y) In rebus magnis, memoriaque dignis Hiſtoriam verſari. *Cic. de Orat. l.* 2.

ties in the matter of an *Hiſtory*. (τ) That they may be great things, and ſuch as may be fit to be made publick. None has explain'd better what choice an *Hiſtorian* ought to make of his Subject, than *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus*, in the Preface of his *Hiſtory*, and in his Judgment upon *Thucydides*, where he prefers the choice which *Herodotus* has made of his Subject to that of *Thucydides*, for the reaſons which he brings. But, as falſehood often reſembles Truth, it requires a great deal of diſcretion and ſagacity, to make an exact diſtinction of it, to unriddle the true motives of important Actions, from their colours and their pretexts, and to chooſe your Argument wiſely, which may become curious and fine by the circumſtances well lay'd together, and by the order wherein you muſt reduce that which is too wide and far diffus'd, by reſtraining it within the natural extent of thoſe limits it ought to have. When it is ſo reduc'd, let the *Hiſtorian* render

(τ) Hiſtoriam aſſuetam diſcurrere per negotiorum celſitudines non humilium minutias indagare cauſarum. *Ammian. Marcel. l. 26.*

himſelf Maſter of it by a deep Meditation upon his Subject, which he ought intirely to underſtand. (a) But let him alſo be ſo exact and religious, as never to abuſe the Credit of the Publick, by giving his own Conjectures for truth, or certain things for doubtful ones. Let him aſcend, as much as in him lies, to the Spring of the Inſtructions he ſhall have given him, to make a juſt diſtinction of them. Let him never aſſure things upon common Reports, of which the Authors are always uncertain. Let him deliver them upon very ſure Memoirs, and upon very faithful Relations. Let him not abandon himſelf too raſhly to the *Hiſtorians* which have been before him, leſt he ſhould loſe his way by following ill Guides. Let him make a great difference between thoſe Relations that are intereſted, or ſuſpected of Prejudice, and thoſe that are not ſo. Let him always have a care of the Partialities of thoſe which furniſh him with Memoirs, becauſe preoccupation can never make

(a) Equidem non affirmare ſuſtineo de quibus dubito, nec ſubducere quæ accepi. *Curt. l. 9.*

make but falſe *Hiſtories*. *Herodotus*, (whoſe *Hiſtory* (*b*) *Tully* condemns as fabulous) wrote only upon ill Memoirs, as *Joſephus* pretends. (*c*) *Thucydides*, who had a mind to mend himſelf by avoiding that fault, confines himſelf to the *Hiſtory* of his Time, not truſting any body, in writing only what he had ſeen, or what he had learn'd from People worthy to be believ'd, and from *Memoirs*, which he collected with great expences, not only from the *Athenians*, but alſo from the *Lacedemonians*, that he might be inform'd of both Parties. *Xenophon*, *Polybius* and *Procopius*, have done almoſt the ſame thing. *Dio Caſſius* confeſſes in his *Hiſtory*, that he had been ten years in preparing the materials. (*d*) *Petrarch* aſſures us, that *Saluſt* went into *Africa*, that he himſelf might obſerve the Situation of the Places he was to ſpeak of in his *Hiſtory* of the *War* of *Jugurtha*, not being willing to truſt any other than his own eyes. For it is very important to be well aſſur'd of the ground you write

(*b*) Apud *Herodotum* ſunt innumerabiles fabulæ. *l.* 1. *de Leg.*

(*c*) *Marcellin.* in vita *Thucyd.*

(*d*) *Saluſtius* marca tranſgreſſus dicitur, ut oculis ſuis crederet de conditionibus locorum. *Petrarc.*

write upon. *Lucian* makes the *Hiſtorian* of his Time paſs for a fool, who wrote the *War* of *Armenia* upon common reports, having never ſeen any body who had been in *Syria*, where the Battel was fought: And (e) *Vopiſcus* took the reſolution to write the *Hiſtory* of the Emperour *Aurelian*, only upon the aſſurance that *Junius Tyberianus*, Miniſter of State, gave him, to furniſh him with good *Records*. But it is not enough to have had a ſhare in the Tranſactions of affairs; there is alſo great need of an Excellent Spirit to deliver them well.

(e) *Vopiſc.* in præfat. *Hiſt.*

(f) *Hiſt. lib.* 12.

(f) *Polibius* ſays, that *Calliſthenes* was eye witneſs of the Action between *Darius* and *Alexander*, when he gain'd the ſtraits of *Cilicia*: yet for all that, there are a great many very groſs errors in the Deſcription of that important *Expedition*, and all becauſe he was ignorant of the Art of *War*, and of the order which was obſerv'd in Battels in thoſe Days. You muſt then, above all things, be very ſure of your

your Matter, which ſhall never be wanting to thoſe that have Wit: but you may want aſſurance, if you do not well diſcern the things you relate. How many falſe Memoirs are found, becauſe they are ſpoil'd by People that were intereſted? though nothing is more common than Materials for *Hiſtory*, by reaſon that every thing may ſerve to it: We may ſay alſo, that nothing is ſcarcer than a ſufficient aſſurance of them to fit them for it: and it is hardly found, becauſe Prejudice occurs every where. (g) *Boccaline* upon that Subject deſerves your eſteem, when he adviſes you to write nothing but what you have ſeen, and not to make it publick before you dye. That way you'r ſure of what you ſay, and there is no prejudice againſt it. But, take care above all things, to chooſe great Subjects, which can ſubſiſt upon their own ſtock: a great matter gives luſter and weight to your words; and Art muſt play in ſmall Subjects, and ſupply their weakneſs.

(g) *Boccal.* in Raggual. di *Parnaſſo.*

VII.

VII.

The Form.

The Form, which ought to be given to *Hiſtory*, is that which is moſt eſſential to it. It is that which makes it Great or Little, and it is that from whence you take the Author's genius. You muſt then have an exalted Spirit, capable of great Idea's, if you will write well; that ſo, becoming a Maſter of your Subject, you may give your Matter what Form you pleaſe. It is upon that Model that *Livy* gives to his *Hiſtory* a character of greatneſs, which is beyond all other *Hiſtorians*, by giving to all the Subjects he treats of, the colours their ground is capable to receive. Thus he gives to the laſt Kings of *Rome* all the Pride that an abſolute Authority inſpir'd them with; He changes the Spirit of the *Commonwealth*, by the auſtere Virtue of the firſt Conſuls, by the Popular Motions of the *Tribunes*, by the auſterity of the Government of the *Decemvirs*; by the lazy Deli-

ca-

cacy of the laſt Conſuls; that he diſtinguiſhes each Age by the Genius which has been predominant in it, not confounding the different motions of that genius with the different circumſtances of Times, which don't reſemble one another, and that he ſuſtains himſelf always by the great Images he gives of the things he treats of. *Tacitus* to the contrary, gives almoſt to all his Matters the ſame form: all is done there by Policy; the People he ſpeaks of, have always a Spirit higher than others. It is not their Spirit which makes them move, 'tis that of the *Hiſtorian*, who having a ſpirit too compacted, gives always the ſame Air to his expreſſions, and the ſame turn to his thoughts: all things reſemble one another. *Policy* is ſtill made the cauſe and the reſult of all things. (*b*) If *Auguſtus* on his death-bed choſe one to ſucceed him, he appointed an *Emperour* worſe than himſelf, on purpoſe that he might be mourn'd for. If (*i*) *Tyberius* made *Piſo* Governour of *Syria*, 'twas

(*b*) *Tyberium* aſcitum, quod ejus arrogantiam introſpexerit, & comparatione deterrima ſibi gloriam quæſiviſſe. *Tacit. l.* 1. *Annal.*

(*i*) *Dolabella* in abſurdam adulationem progreſſus. *l.* 3. *Ann.*

'twas only to make him a Spy to *Germanicus*, by whom *Egypt* had been govern'd, and whoſe glory he did envy. *Dolabella's* flatteries diſpleas'd him, becauſe they were too courſe. (k) If he baniſhes *Sylla*, 'tis becauſe he thinks his ſilence a wiſe diſſimulation. That *Emperour's* modeſty; is nothing but a hidden Ambition; his favours are only ſnares; his moderation is nothing but pride, and his Religion is nothing but grimace. He reckons it a ſign of the God's diſpleaſure, that *Sejanus* ſhould become Favorite of the *Emperour*, and be raiſed to be a Miniſter of State. *Arruntius* poiſons himſelf out of Policy, that he might not fall into the hands of a maſter more brutiſh than *Tyberius*. He finds an agreeableneſs even in the *Emperour Claudius's* folly, and a great deal of Wit in the debauches and brutiſhneſs of *Nero*. (l) Some of the *Blockheads* of that *Age* and *Reign*, he repreſents as men of refin'd Prudence. In fine, all the characters reſemble one another; Nature

(k) Suſpectabat *Syllam* ſocors ejus ingenium callidumque ſimulatorem interpretando. *l.* 13. *Annal.*

(l) Temporibus *Neronis* ſapientia pro inertia fuit. *ibid.*

Nature has no ſhare in any thing, her Sentiments are always forc'd, and every where it is the ſame genius, which reigns by the impreſſion of the *Hiſtorian's* Wit, and which has no great variety. *Mariana* runs on with a fuller career. The *Romans*, the *Carthaginians*, the *Chriſtians*, the *Arabians*, the *Moors*, the *Mahometans*, make every one their Figure. The Wit of the Author mingles it ſelf only with the other Spirits, to diſtinguiſh them according to their characters, opening always ſome new way as different as the Subjects he treats of requires. We may ſay alſo, that among the *Moderns*, no *Hiſtory* is greater for its form than that of *Mariana*.

VIII.

Romance only pleaſes, *Hiſtory* inſtructs: This is the eſſential difference between them; this having no other end, than the inſtruct- *The End of Hiſtory.*

ſtructing of the Publick. (*m*) For, as it is not compil'd only for the preſent; its aim ought not to be limited to the time, which paſſes away, but to Poſterity, which is Everlaſting. What folly were it in a Man, that ſhould think of nothing but diverting the People of the Age he lives in, when he may become uſeful to all Ages? Thoſe are the Reaſons (*n*) *Lucian* uſes, to oblige an *Hiſtorian* to think of nothing but of being uſeful, by ruling the Hearts and Minds of Men by the Inſtruction he gives them. They are deceiv'd, he ſays, who pretend that *Hiſtory* can be divided into two parts, the Uſeful and Agreeable; for an *Hiſtorian* ought to have no other proſpect, than the profit People draw from a ſincere and true Narration. If he intermix ſome thing that is agreeable, he ought not to corrupt the Truth, but rather to embelliſh it, and make it the more acceptable. And, to juſtifie his Opinion, he ſhews the extravagant way of the Hiſtorians of his Age, which made them-

(*m*) Alias in Hiſtoria leges obſervandas, alias in Poemate; illa ad veritatem quæque, in hoc ad delectationem referri pleraque. *Cic. 1. de legib.*

(*n*) O pulchra iſta pars, quæ actiones vitamque bene format ac dirigit. *Tacit. Ann. l. 3.*

themſelves ridiculous by following other Principles. (o) *Herodotus* ſought how to pleaſe thoſe of the Age he wrote in, but his Sincerity was ſo run down in the following Ages, that it (p) made the Sincerity of the *Greek Hiſtorians* be ſuſpected in *Quintilian*'s Time. *Photius* makes mention of an *Hiſtorian*, which thought that his ſaying incredible things made him the more acceptable. And (q) *Seneca* complains, that in his Time there were *Hiſtorians* who pretended to make themſelves famous by their fabulous Narrations. This was always pleaſant to the People who delight in Fictions; but not to Men of Senſe and Honeſty, who love Truth only. In the following Ages, the *Arabians* ſtuff'd their Writings with ſo many Fables, that they ſpoil'd the greateſt part of the *Greek Hiſtorians* of their Age, by the fancy then in faſhion, of mingling ſurpriſing Adventures in all their Relations: they thought the only way to pleaſe the People, was to ſay incredible things. The ſame ſpirit in-

(o) *Græcis* hiſtoriis plerumque poeticæ ſimilis eſt licentia. *Fab. l.* 2. *c.* 4.

(p) Et quicquid *Græcia* mendax peccat in Hiſtoria. *Juv. Sat.* 10.

(q) Quidam incredibilium relatu commendationem parant: & Lectorem aliud acturum, ſi per quotidiana duceretur, miraculo excitant; & opus ſuum fieri popolare non putant, niſi mendacio aſperſerint. *Sen. l.* 7. *quæſt. Nat.*

infected part of the *Modern Græcians*; which is the cauſe why the Account we have of thoſe Times by the *Byzantine Hiſtory*, is not the ſureſt in the World, the Authors of it not ſeeming very exact; and when an Author writes by their Memoirs, he ought to take great Precautions againſt ſo falſe an Idea, to make People believe him, becauſe the leaſt falſhood ſpoils all, and converts Truth into a Fable. Even the trueſt things ought not to be told, when they appear incredible or extraordinary, unleſs you give 'em an appearance, or, at leaſt, a colour of Truth. It is what *Thucydides* does: and, though he ſaw *Herodotus* in ſo great an eſteem, that the names of the *Muſes* were given to his Books, he thought of nothing but of ſpeaking the *Truth*, without minding to pleaſe the People. (r) *I had rather*, ſaid he, *pleaſe by telling Truth, than be pleaſant in telling Tales: becauſe, if I be not pleaſant, I may be uſeful; and perhaps, I might do hurt in being agreeable.* (s) Be then ſtrongly perſwaded

(r) *Lucian.* de conſer. Hiſt.

(s) Utilitatem juvandi prætulerunt gratiæ placendi. *Plin. præf. Hiſt. Nat.* de *Thucyd.* & al. Hiſt.

ded, that nothing is fine in *Hiſtory*, but that which is real; and that, *Truth* being its greateſt Ornament, an *Hiſtorian* that will pleaſe, ought to ſpeak true.

IX.

That Truth is the only mean through which Hiſtory comes to its end: and how it is to be found.

Truth being the only mean by which *Hiſtory* can ſurely inſtruct; Truth ought to make the chiefeſt Rule of Hiſtory, as your *Hiſtory* ought to be the ground of People's *Belief*. But where is it to be found? Is there any thing in the World more hidden than Truth? For, beſides the Clouds ſhe is commonly encompaſs'd with, which render her ſometimes unacceſſible, ſhe is wrap'd up with all the Diſguiſes men's imaginations are capable of. And if the ordinary ignorance of ſhort-ſighted Writers is an obſtacle to the knowledge of Truth; their little ſincerity, nay, their fabulous way, is a far greater. For how often do we give wrong Judgment, through falſe Idea's which ariſe from our Paſſion, Intereſt, or

Prejudice, which Error or Opinion are wont to inſpire Men's minds? In fine, Truth being of a nature ſo unknown to Men, either through her own obſcurity, or through the weakneſs of their Underſtanding, or for want of application; there is nothing harder than to make her known to the Publick without defacing her. And, as ſhe is continually corrupted, and even prophan'd, through the baſeneſs of her Adorers, the moſt part of the *Hiſtorians* being commonly Penſioners of Courts: You ought to ſet your ſelf above hope or fear, as ſoon as you meddle with writing, that you may always dare to ſay the Truth. But, it is not enough to have a mind to ſay it, you muſt alſo make your ſelf able, by ſeeking it in its pureſt original, by ſearching the Cloſets of the Learned and curious, and by conſulting the Inſtructions of thoſe who have had a ſhare in buſineſſes, to unravel what has been moſt myſterious in the moſt private intrigues.

You

You muſt, above all things, ſtudy Men in general; to diſcover their Spirit, to dive into their Secrets, to know the greateſt weakneſs of their hearts, to penetrate their very thoughts, that you may not impoſe falſe ones upon them; and to judge of them by thoſe natural and unforeſeen Motions, which ſlip from them without their notice. That way you may diſcover the true ſentiments of the Soul; the heart having no ſpare time to obſerve it ſelf and to put on a diſguiſe: for as ſoon as it reflects, it forces it ſelf, as (t) *Tacitus* obſerves in *Agrippa*, and in *Octavia* Siſter to *Britannicus*. For, in the moment that the poiſon which *Nero* ſent him at the Banquet at which he died, ſeiz'd his Spirits; *Octavia*, as well as *Agrippina* ſhew'd Conſternation in their faces: But, as *Octavia* thought to marry *Nero*, and *Agrippina* his Mother; a Woman naturally proud, had a mind to Reign, upon a politick Account they reſum'd their Countenance; and that they might not anger the

(t) *Agrippinæ* pavor & conſternatio mentis emicuit, quamvis vultu premeretur. *Octavia*, quamvis rudibus annis, dolorem, charitatem, affectus omnes abſcondere didicerat. Ita poſt breve ſilentium repetita convivii lætitia. *Tacit. l.* 13. *Ann.*

Emperour, who was making ſure of his Rival to the Empire; they force their Sentiments, hide their Sorrows, and continue their Supper with the ſame mirth, (whilſt the Prince was expiring in the Antichamber) as if nothing had paſs'd of that kind. There is a great Spirit in that Author, whoſe deſign is, to give an exact knowledg of thoſe whoſe *Hiſtory* he writes. But, our late Authors think but little of that, and that is the reaſon why we have ſo few true *Hiſtorians*. (u) There is a Temper of mind, fit to ſay things as they are, which is not a common one. It is one of the properties of *Thucydides*, the moſt faithful and ſincere of all *Hiſtorians*: There is in his Works a Taſt of Truth, and a diſcerning of Truth from Falſhood, join'd to an exact Spirit, which acquir'd him the approbation and eſteem of all people. (w) *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus* praiſes him above all for his ſticking to the Truth, pretending that he never ſaid any thing againſt his Conſcience; in which

(u) Rerum geſtarum pronunciator ſincerus *Thucydides. Cic. de Clar. Orat.*

(w) *Dionyſ Halyc.* in Judicio de *Toucyd.*

which he has excell'd *Herodotus*, whoſe whole deſign was to pleaſe People: for *Strabo* ſays, that he mingles Fables with his *Hiſtories* on purpoſe to render them agreeable. (x) The *Hiſtorians* of the Low Empire became ſo great Flaterers, that their want of Sincerity made *Vopiſcus* change the mind he had of writing the *Hiſtory* of his Time. But, the Governour of the Town, who was a Favorite of the Emperour, took off that Scruple, in a Diſcourſe he had with him, as they were once walking together, by ſhewing him, that the greateſt *Hiſtorians* had been deceiv'd in many things. (y) *Pollio* tells us, that the ſame thing had happen'd to *Cæſar* in his *Commentarys*, for not having review'd his writings. If the greateſt men are ſubject to err, what will ordinary ones do? (z) And if Truth does not always ſhew it ſelf in its purity to extraordinary Spirits, how will it make it ſelt known to ſmall ones, who, through the quality of their *Genius*, can ſay nothing without altering

(x) Scribe ſecurus, dicas quod velis, habiturus mendaciorum comites quos hiſtoriæ eloquentiæ miramur authores. *Vopiſc. præfat. Hiſt.*

(y) *Aſin. Poll.* apud Florid. Sab.

(z) Neminem Scriptorum, quantum ad Hiſtoriam pertinet, non aliquid eſſe mentitum. *Vopiſc. ibid.*

the Circumſtances, by diminiſhing or inlarging the objects? for there is nothing ſcarcer than an exact temper, fit to ſay things as they are: we ſay them as we conceive 'em; and we conceive 'em good or bad, according as our Imagination is: and, of many that have ſeen the ſame thing, there is not often above two that relates it alike, every one ſaying what he has ſeen, according to the Idea he has conceiv'd of it, and as his mind is turn'd. The quality then, I ſay, moſt requiſite for an *Hiſtorian*, is a Spirit exact and faithful, in ſpeaking the Truth in all its Circumſtances, ſo as to deſerve the People's belief. But it is not enough for an *Hiſtorian* to ſay what is true, he muſt give it alſo a fine turn: that turn is the Style; let us ſee which is the moſt Convenient for *Hiſtory*.

X.

X.

The Style is the Form of the Diſcourſe, and the manner you write in: the fitteſt for every body is that which is moſt comformable to his genius, which ought to be follow'd, without forcing it; ſo that a Style mixt is always vicious. It is a defect of *Strada* in his *Hiſtory* of the Low Country's, who by the clearneſs of his Imagination, and by his great Lectures, had fill'd his mind with different characters; and that mixture which is found in his manner of writing, how agreeable ſoever it is, diminiſhes its Perfection. (a) *Mariana*, who was of the ſame Society, has more ſtrength, and is ſmoother in his Style. But the fitteſt Style for *Hiſtory* is that which has moſt of the Character of Truth, and wherein that natural light of Sincerity, which commonly accompanies the Truth, ſhines moſt: for, people eaſily believe things digeſted thus. (b) *The Style for Hi-*

The Style fit for Hiſtory.

(a) Verum ipſum inſcribentis ſinceritate candoreque elucet. *Melch. Can. in loc. Theol. l.* 11. *c.* 6.

(b) *Luc. de* coaſer. *Hiſt.*

Hiſtory, as *Lucian* ſays, *muſt be clear and natural, becauſe that clearneſs is the Rule of what it ought to ſay, as Truth is a Rule of what it ought to think.* Its (c) Diſcourſe muſt be free, though well compacted, and that it may have that freedom which makes it natural, it requires leſs number than Turn. (d) But becauſe an *Hiſtorian* ought to read ancient Authors, to make himſelf a Style according to his capacity, he ſhall find it neceſſary to make his Obſervations in that Study, and ſo form to himſelf a Method fit for his Deſign. (e) *Herodotus*'s Style is ſweet, flowing, and agreeable. That of (f) *Thucydides* is nobler and greater, but not ſo natural; he has a rough way, which makes him obſcure, and he has leſs number and leſs turn than *Herodotus*. (g) *Xenophon* has a tender and ſweet ſtrain. His Diſcourſe, which is not unlike to pure and clear Water, has no fellow in *Antiquity*, except *Cæſar*'s; for nothing was ever writ in *Latin* more clearly. (h) A Modern Critick's obſervation (who remarks

(c) Quanquam vincta ſit, ſoluta videri debet oratio. *Fab. l.* 9 *c.* 4.

(d) Hiſtoria non tam finitos numeros, quam orbem contextumque deſiderat. *ibid.*

(e) In *Herodoto* omnia leniter fluunt: tum ipſa dialectus habet jucunditatem. *Fab. l.* 9. *c.* 4.

(f) *Thucydides* præſractior, nec ita rotundus. In eo orbem orationis deſidero. *Cic.* in *Bruto.*

(g) Obſcurus eſt quia preſſus. *ibid.*

(h) Tribus libris de bello civili *Cæſari* falſo aſcriptis nihil durius, nec candori *Cæſariano* minus conveniens *Flor. Sabin.* in *calum. long. lat.*

marks ſome difference of Style in his Book of the Civil Wars, which he pretends to have not been written ſo purely as the Wars of the *Gaules*) goes beyond me: I have not knowledge enough to find that, and I am of *Suetonius*'s Mind, who makes no difference throughout. I confeſs I am delighted with the Eloquence and Simplicity of that Author, no body ever wrote more clearly; (*i*) but the Nobleneſs of *Livy*'s Diſcourſe charm my Spirits. That *Hiſtorian* has been read with reſpect in all Nations, for almoſt now two thouſand years, upon the ſcore of that Majeſtick way of ſpeaking, which has been admir'd by all Ages. Nothing alſo fills my Fancy better than that admirable choice of Words always fitted to his Sentiments, and that expreſſing of Sentiments always conformable to the things he Speaks of. In a word, he is the Man of all, that has better attain'd to that Style *Cicero* adviſes one to follow in *Hiſtory*. And

(*i*) Genus orationis fuſum & cum lenitate quadam æquabili profluens, ſine judiciali aſperitate, & Sententiarum forentium aculeis proſequendum. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

And 'tis by that great Model that *Mariana*, *Buchanan*, *Paulus Æmilius*, *Paulus Jovius*, and all thoſe who carried any Vogue after their Age, have formed themſelves in the way of Writing *Hiſtory*. *Tacitus* is not ſo fit; for that Luſtre of his high flights is like Lightning, whoſe Brightneſs dazels, inſtead of making the Matter plain. *Paterculus* and *Florus* have given a ſmall Air, flouriſh'd and delicate, which pleaſes their *Readers*. The Writers *Auguſtæ Hiſtoriæ*, as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Lampridius*, *Spartianus*, *Julius Capitolius*, *Vopiſcus*, and the others, have degenerated in a cold and impure Style, which has nothing of that Noble Simplicity of former Ages. (k) *Saluſt* is great and elevate in his way of Writing, which cauſes *Quintilian* to compare him to *Thucydides*. (l) *Q. Curtius* has a poliſh'd and bright Style. And by thoſe two Methods, which are almoſt the only two fit to be uſed, you may examine which of the two is the fitteſt for *Hiſtory*; and that Queſti-

(k) *Saluſtius* rerum Romanorum florentiſſimus Author. *Tac. l.* 3. *Hiſt.*

(l) *Saluſtio* vigente amputatæ Sententiæ, & obſcura brevitas fuere pro cultu. *Sen. l.* 11. *Epiſt.* 114.

Queſtion is the moſt important that can be made upon that Subject.

XI.

Which is the propereſt for Hiſtory, the Great or the flouriſh'd Style?

In a Queſtion of ſo great a Conſequence as this, which is not yet determined; 'tis enough for one to give the Reaſons which may ſerve for the deciſion thereof, when a Man has not the Authority of determining it. (*m*) *Saluſt* has a Greatneſs in his Style; but ſome of his Expreſſions are harſh, which makes him look dry in ſome Places, becauſe he had form'd himſelf by the rudeneſs (*n*) of the Remains of *Cato*; which gives to his *Diſcourſe* a Gravity which looks like Severity. And contrariwiſe, none is more poliſh'd than *Q. Curtius*; It is an *admirable* Flower of *Expreſſion*, which pleaſes Men of Wit, but the buſineſs is, that we muſt examin whether the ſtiff Stile of *Saluſt*, hard as it is, be not wholſomer and fitter for *Hiſtory*, giving as it does Weight,

(*m*) Verba excerpſit *Saluſtius* ex originibus Catonis. *Suet.* in *Aug.*

(*n*) *Saluſtius* Scriptor ſeriæ et ſeveræ orationis. *Aulug. l.* 17. *c.* 18.

Weight, Strength, and Greatneſs to the *Diſcourſe*. Is it not rich? and don't we find ſometimes in that hard and ſevere Stile, that agreeableneſs of which *Demetrius* the *Phalerian* ſpeaks; which (o) *Homer* has ſo well expreſs'd in his *Odyſſæa*, about the Adventures of *Polyphemus*; where *Demetrius* pretends, in his Book of *Elocution*, that he is the firſt *Author* of it; that is to ſay, thoſe Graces which have nothing ſoft nor effeminate, and which are agreeable without being affected. The ſame *Author* quotes many Examples of it, taken out of *Xenophon*, who has the Art of making things Pleaſant, which of themſelves are not at all ſo. Herein that ſevere Stile properly conſiſts, which (p) *Hermogenes* prefers to a ſoft Stile, when he ſays, that a meer naked *Narration* has often more Strength, than a Narration which is adorn'd and flouriſh'd; becauſe a ſevere Style may have ſome Greatneſs, and a ſoft Style can only have a *Mediocrity*. That is alſo the Reaſon

(o) *Homer.* Odyſſ. *l.* 9.

(p) *Hermogen.* de Ideis, *l.* 1. *c.* 5. & *l.* 2. *de invent.*

ſon why he reckons good Senſe, (tho' never ſo naked) amongſt the qualities of the Noble and elevated Style. This was, ſays he, the Character of *Pericles*, upon which *Demoſthenes* form'd himſelf to that ſtrong and fierce *Eloquence*, wherein he has excell'd: *Hiperides*, ſays he, in another place, is great tho' careleſs: his Style is rough and dry, but it is noble and elevate; (q) for, that *Auſterity* of Stile, which was the true Character of the *Greeks*, is nothing but (r) a true and exact Senſe, and a juſt and correct Reaſon; which, without ſtopping at a ſhew of Brightneſs, purſues *Solidity*. (s) It has nothing falſe in its Sentiments; all its Attention is bent towards a Sobriety of *Diſcourſe*, which is nothing but Senſe and Simplicity. *Plutarch* alſo attributes that Style to *Demoſthenes*, which *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus* does not diſtinguiſh from the great and elevate. It is, in fine, that ſtrength of Expreſſion, which alone gives to our *Diſcourſe*, *Nobleneſs* and *Majeſty*, by which

(q) Auſterus græca conſuetudine *Cornal. Fron. de differ. vocum.*

(r) Artis ſeveræ ſi quis amat effectus, mentemque magnis applicat, prius more frugalitatis lege polleat exacta. *Pet.*

(s) Si juvenes verba atroci ſtylo effoderent, jam illa grandis oratio haberet majeſtatis ſuas pondus. *Petr.*

which it becomes great and ſolid. Hence it is that *Cæſar*, thô unaffected, has ſomething *Nobler* in the Simplicity of his *Diſcourſe*, than *Tacitus* with all the *Pomp* of his Words: and there appears a kind of *Careleſneſs* in the *Antients*, which is worth all the Diligence of the *Moderns*. (t) I don't ſay, but that a flouriſh'd Style may be of uſe in ſmall *Hiſtories*, which have not ground enough to ſupport themſelves without help. (*) The *Princeſs* of *Montpenſier* ought to be written with all the *Eloquence* Art can allow; but the *Hiſtory* of the War of *Paris*, and of the Late Troubles, ought to be written with a greater Air; Small Subjects require Finery, great Ones Strength and Dignity. Let *Paterculus* be prettily adorn'd in the Character he took; but *Livy* ought to be great and ſerious: ſmall *Beauties* ought to be finely attir'd to ſhew themſelves; but great ones have no need of it, becauſe they bear a good weight of themſelves. Beſides, Truth,

(t) Hiſtorica locutio, ubi munditiem retinuerit, majora ornamenta non requirat, ſimplex, pura, naturalis ſit, nec Atticum ſiccitatem referre poſſit. *Beni. l. 1. de Hiſt.*

(u) *It is a ſmall Hiſtory in French.*

Truth, which is the Soul of *Hiſtory*, becomes ſuſpicious, as ſoon as it is too much adorned; and Careleſneſs has more an Air of Sincerity. This is what was to be obſerved upon the Style in particular, after the general Notions I have given thereof: but as it is of uſe only in *Narration*, we'll *examine* in what manner it ought to be.

XII.

The Narration.

Hiſtory being, properly ſpeaking, nothing but a (*w*) *Rehearſal* of things paſt, and in the ſame order as they came to paſs, ought alſo to be a continued *Narration*. (*x*) Therefore, as it hath nothing more eſſential than the knowing how to relate well, ſo, nothing is more difficult. (*y*) For it is a great Art to fix an unconſtant and fickle *Reader*'s mind. What *wiſdom* does it not require to mannage every where thoſe colours that are neceſſary to give the reſemblance to things, and to mix conſtantly with them thoſe

(*w*) Hiſtoria eſt narratio rei geſtæ, per quam ea quæ facta ſunt dignoſcuntur. *Iſidor. l. 1. Orig.*

(*x*) Expoſitio præteritorum Temporum. *Fab. l. 4. c. 2.*

(*y*) Cuſtodia fidelis rerum geſtarum. *Tit. Liv. l. 6. Annal.*

thoſe features, thoſe light touches, thoſe graces, that warmth, that quickneſs, which hinders a Narration from languiſhing? how dexterous muſt an Hiſtorian be, to uſe both Art and Wit, in what he ſays, yet not to ſeem to do ſo; (z) And by all the variety of Expreſſions, Figures and Thoughts, to adorn every part of his *Hiſtory*, without the leaſt ſmatch of Oſtentation? what knowledg ought he to have, to diſcern what muſt be ſaid, and what let alone, to ſpeak and hold his Peace, to dwell no longer than is fit upon the Points he treats of; to explain things at large, or by degrees, as neceſſity or a good *Decorum* requires; to enlarge or ſhorten them; to retrench, by a felicity of Expreſſion, thoſe *Topicks*, which otherwiſe would be inſipid, and never to weary the Reader by too great an uniformity? In fine, what a Judgment to ſeparate carefully that which is becomming from that which is not Decent? for upon that chiefly runs all the Beauty of a Narration,

(z) Dare orationis varios vultus. gaudent enim res varietate. *Fab. l. 9. c. 2.*

on, and all the Grace of *Hiſtory*. But a Narration is perfect whenever it has nothing of Superfluity. This is, in a word, the utmoſt perfection it is capable of being brought to. The Rules lay'd down by *Cicero* and (a) *Quintilian* ſay no more: after them I have nothing to ſay. For when once the Superfluities are cut off, the Circumlocutions which are not uſeful, the feigned *Deſcriptions* which are onely fit to make a ſhew, and all the vain Ornaments of the Diſcourſe are ſuppreſs'd, every thing comes cloſe to its point. (b) The Vigour, the Strength and the Dignity, all ſupport each other, without any Flatneſs. In that (c) *Thucydides* out-did *Herodotus*, who is too big in ſome places, where he gives himſelf too much to the fineneſs of his Imagination. (d) *Saluſt* is of a Character exact and ſhort. He is properly commendable for the quickneſs and torrent of his Diſcourſe. (e) That is it which animates him, and makes him ſo lively. *Cæſar*'s Nar-

(a) Circumciſa expoſitio rei quæ ſupervacuis caret. *Fab. l.* 4. *c.* 1.

(b) Denſus, brevis, ſemper inſtans ſibi comitatis affectibus. *Thucydides. Fab. l.* 10. *c.* 1.

(c) *Thucydides* verbis aptus & preſſus. *Cic. l.* 2. *de Orat.*

(d) Immortalem illam *Saluſtii* velocitatem conſequutus *Livius. Fab. l.* 10. *c.* 1.

(e) Illa *Saluſtiana* brevitas, qua nihil apud aures eruditas perfectius eſſe poteſt, captanda. *ibid.*

ration is admirable for its Purity and Eloquence, but it is not quick enough; and he wants of that Strength which he found too abounding in *Terence.* (f) As for *Livy*, he has a way of reherſing that is very taking, by that Art he has of mixing in his Narration ſmall things with great ones; becauſe great ones, when too much enlarg'd, tire the Reader by reaſon of the great Attention they require, and ſmall ones refreſh him: it is with that ſame Method that he varies his Adventures; that he interchanges ſad things for delightful ones; that Mannages his Light and his Shade with a wiſe and judicious Temper, that ſo he may keep the *Reader* in tune by that *Variety.* For a *Narration* becomes inſipid, as ſoon as it wants diverſity of Accidents, Adventures, Figures, and Expreſſions. You muſt even allow ſome intervals to things, that your Reader may take breath, and not intermix your matter by too great a confuſion of things. It is a fault that *Dionyſius Halycar-*

(f) *Livius* in narrando mira jucunditatis, clariſſimique candoris, ita ducuntur omnia tum rebus, tum perſonis accommodata. *Fab. l.* 10. *c.* 1.

carnaſſæus judges (*g*) *Thucydides* guilty of, in the third Book of his Hiſtory, where he ſo mixes the ſeveral Intereſts (*h*) of the *Athenians*, *Lacedemonians*, and of the other People of *Greece*, that he confounds, in a manner, the very appearance of things, by a Narration too much loaded with Matter: and this failure is incident to thoſe of a copious and fluent Invention. Tho' the (*i*) order of Times be the moſt natural to a Narration, becauſe it unfolds things paſs'd; there is nevertheleſs an order of Reaſon in ranging *Events*, which ought particularly to be the ſtudy of an *Hiſtorian*. It is only by that ſecret Order that you may endear your Reader, ſo as to imprint your own Sentiments on his Mind, when you ſhew him Men acting naturally as they ought: and when you ſhew him their Manners, their Thoughts, their Deſigns and their Motives, as they are in a kind of dependency upon each other in the ſame natural order, which joyns them well together.

(*g*) *Thucydides* creber rerum frequentia. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

(*h*) *Dionyſius Halyc.* tractat. *de judic. Thucyd.*

(*i*) Rerum ratio ordinem temporum deſiderat. *Cic. l. 2. de Orat.*

(k) In rebus magnis, memoriaque dignis, conſilia primum, deinde acta, poſtea eventus expectantur, *Cic.* l. 2. de Orat.

(k) An *Hiſtorian* that can well put thoſe things together, is a great Man; that is the thing which pleaſes, and not thoſe extraordinary Events which People run after for want of Judgment; for nothing is more taking than to ſee men act in that Order; that alone, when all comes to all, fixes the mind. *Livy* excell'd in that, becauſe he follow'd cloſely that Order, by drawing the Thread of his *Hiſtory* with a connexion of Diſcourſe, and by weaving together always thoſe Actions that are of an equal ſize.

(l) *Longin.* c. 18.

(l) *Longinus* has well obſerved, that *Thucydides* breaks the Order of things, to ſurprize the Reader by that diſorder, by bringing in unexpected Occurrences in his Narration: He tells even ſometimes things paſt in the preſent time, ſhewing them as thô they were paſſing actually, which makes the Reader more attentive, and affects him moſt. *Tacitus* is of a ſoaring Spirit, who does not ſay things in order. His great ſenſe, ſhut up in the compaſs of a few words, has not

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an extent proportioned to his Reader's minds, who are often overwhelmed with it: and having not a natural ſtrain in what he ſays, he ſcarce ever fits his words to mens Notions; he does not inſtruct well: For Example, when on the occaſion of the *Papian Law* he explains the ground of the Laws; or in another place, he ſpeaks of *Aſylums*, he does not return to the origin of things; he ſhews nothing clearly, or he does it ill; as when he explains the *Religion* of the *Jews*, l. 5. of his *Hiſtory*; his very Style is not fit for it, which is a great fault in an *Hiſtorian*, whoſe chiefeſt Profeſſion is to inſtruct. After all, a Narration is good (which way ſoever it is digeſted) when it pleaſes.

XIII.

The great Art of a Narration, and one of its chiefeſt Beauties, conſiſts in the Tranſitions. In effect, thoſe fine and natural turns, *Tranſitions.*

thoſe happy paſſages from one Subject to another, make the ſtream of a Diſcourſe engaging: thoſe inſinuating ways lead the mind of a Reader from one Object to another, and ſhew him a great deal, without tiring him: In fine, all that admirable Oeconomy of the Tranſition, is that which is moſt delicate and ſpritely in the Narration, which ſeem always conſtrain'd, and never eaſie or natural without that Art. It is not enough to ſpeak well to attain it: you muſt be eloquent; you muſt be Maſter of your Subject, and to know the grounds and conſequences well; for the fitteſt Tranſitions ought to be much more in things than in words. So that thoſe Excurſions from Kingdom to Kingdom, from Nation to Nation, from Age to Age, without Method, and without Management, are no way opportune to a well digeſted *Hiſtory*, wherein all things ought to be well laid and compacted; as in a great *Palace*, where nothing ought

ought to be ſcatter'd or irregular; for the compactneſs, and the proportion of its Apartments, make one of its greateſt Beauties: So *Hiſtory* is like a Body, compos'd of its Members by the Natural Union; in which *Saunder's* Hiſtory of the *Schiſm* of *England*, is very defective, amongſt Moderns, as that of *Florus* and *Paterculus*, amongſt the Ancients. (m) *Xenophon's* Language is very well knit, ſweet and flowing, yet *Livy* ſtill exceeds him, his Narration being of one even continued thread; his Tranſitions conſiſt leſs in words than in things. *Saluſt* is not ſo well knit; *Tacitus* is ſtill leſs; his Connexions are forc'd, and the ſtream of his Diſcourſe much interrupted, which ſurprizes the Reader, who muſt ſweat, if he will follow that Author. The moſt difficult Tranſitions are thoſe which are found in the commoneſt things; for an Author ought to ſuſtain himſelf with ſtrong Expreſſions, where the matter is but ſmall,

(m) *Xenophon* fluens & ſine ſalebris oratio, *Cic.*

and muſt find a way how to couple things that otherwiſe have no Union at all. It is in thoſe places he ought to ſhew all his Skill. The Reader's mind is ſo tender, that an *Hiſtorian* cannot always turn it as he pleaſes. But he muſt be conducted from adventure to adventure, by Connexions well cover'd for Order's ſake. For, in a word, he often has a fooliſh pride, and flights, which render him untractable. But there is need of a great deal of Art to vary thoſe Tranſitions, which never ought to be like one another, to give always new Ideas to the Reader, by not ſhewing him always the ſame Objects: It is in this an *Hiſtorian* muſt lay out his Induſtry; for herein the gracefulneſs of a Narration conſiſts, which alone can render it acceptable and delightful.

XIV.

XIV.

If a Narration becomes agreeable by the Tranſitions, it becomes credible by the Circumſtances. For nothing engages one more than a Fact cloath'd with good Circumſtances, which thô dark and obſcure of it ſelf, by the particulars becomes palpable, clear, ſenſible and evident; and as the progreſs of great undertakings, and of Affairs of importance, is ſeen only by bringing them into a good order by the ſeveral degrees of their Circumſtances; ſo the Art of explaining the Truth in all its Dependencies, by unravelling what is particular, making one of the great Ornaments of *Hiſtory*, a Writer ought to ſtudy it with all imaginable care. Here follows the Obſervations one may make of it. The great Secret is, to know how to make a wiſe and judicious choice of the Circumſtances

The Circumſtances of a Narration.

cumſtances that are capable of giving a great Idea of things, to imprint in them that Colour which can give them credit, and ſo make way for them to poſſeſs the mind. And this will be obtain'd by a concourſe of great and ſmall Circumſtances mixt with Dexterity, when well choſen. Great Circumſtances give ſome admiration, and ſmall ones pleaſure, provided they are well choſen, and not exaggerated. But thô an Action, which is not exactly reported, makes no impreſſion, you muſt nevertheleſs ſhun thoſe Expreſſions of low and frivolous Particulars, which make a Subject worſe; for you become childiſh, and even ridiculous, by ſticking too cloſe to little things; As that impertinent Hiſtorian (*n*) *Lucian* ſpeaks of, who gives a very particular Deſcription of the *Parthian*'s Veſte, and of the *Roman Emperour*'s Shield, when he deſcribes the Fight. Others, adds he, not thinking of Eſſential things, loſe time in things not uſeful;

(*n*) *Luc.* in Conſer. Hiſt.

uſeful; as he, who after having ſpoke by the by, a word or two of the *Battel*, which made then the Subject of his Diſcourſe, ſtops to relate the Adventures of a *Mooriſh* Knight, the moſt extravagant in the World. So *Procopius*, in his ſecret *Hiſtory*, forgets the Circumſtances neceſſary, and rehearſes what is needleſs. You muſt then, in the recital of any Action of Conſequence, know well how to lay the Circumſtances which are to make the thing plain, and to ſuſtain it in its light, by diſtinguiſhing the Eſſential from that which is not ſo. The moſt accompliſht pattern we have in *Hiſtory* of a great Action, told in all the Circumſtances capable of giving it weight and ſplendor, is *Hannibal*'s March into *Italy*, as it is written in the 21*ſt* Book of the Annals of *Livy*. It is, in my judgment, the moſt perfect part of his *Hiſtory*; and there are few things of that ſtrength in Antiquity. A greater deſign never enter'd into a more ex-

extraordinary mind; and nothing was ever accompliſh't more cleverly. The Argument was, *Hannibal*'s coming out of *Africa*, marching through *Spain*, over the *Pyrenean Hills*; croſſing the *Rhone*, at his very mouth, a *River* vaſt and ſwift, whoſe Banks were cover'd with ſo many Enemies; his opening himſelf a way through the *Alpes*, where no man had ever paſs'd before; travelling upon *Precipices*; diſputing at every ſtep with People that lay in Ambuſcadoes, in continual Filings, amidſt the Snow, Ice, Rain, Torrents, defying Storms and Thunder; making War with Heaven, Earth, and all the Elements; drawing after him an Army of a hundred thouſand Men of different Nations, and all jealous of a General, whoſe Courage they were not able to imitate. The Souldiers Minds were poſſeſt with fear, *Hannibal* alone remains unſhaken, the danger which encompaſſes him, abates the Courage of all the

the Army, but never diſturbs his Mind. All is drawn in a Relation of horrid Circumſtances; in every word of that *Hiſtorian* danger is expreſt; never Picture was better finiſh'd in Hiſtory, touch'd with livelier Colours, and with bolder ſtrokes. Nothing alſo is better adorned with Circumſtances in (o) *Tacitus*, than that Feaſt the Empreſs *Meſſalina* made to ſhew her Love to *Silius*, her Gallant. All the Ceremonies appear'd as thô it had been Vintage-time, that Seaſon favouring the Feaſt; Mirth, Pleaſure, frolick and laſcivious Debauchery, are all expreſs'd with the fineneſs of an exquiſite Eloquence; and the Relation thereof is particulariz'd ſuccinctly and ſenſibly, and made throughout in ſuch a manner, as ſpeaks Life and Spirit; and nothing is more judiciouſly plac'd, rendring by this lively repreſentation *Meſſalina*'s Death, which follows after more Tragical and full of Horror. In fine, there are happy Circumſtances, which give

(o) *Tacit. l. 2. Annal.*

give an agreeableneſs every where, where they are apply'd; but you muſt underſtand them well, to know where they muſt be apply'd. Things become often greater by their Circumſtances, than they do by themſelves. Let us then look into thoſe Circumſtances which can both inſtruct and pleaſe, and keep the Reader from doazing. Let us imitate *Davila*, who is ſo taking, by the Art he has duly to cloath what he ſays with proper Circumſtances; yet great Relations weary the Spirits; ſo let us make a judicious diſtinction of the Circumſtances Neceſſary, and of Importance, from thoſe that are not ſo. Let us conſult *Lucian*, and his Diſcourſe upon Hiſtory; he is a great Maſter in that. But to make a compleat Narration, we muſt joyn to the Circumſtances of its things, the Motives of its Actions; for Motives well touch'd make a Narration as curious, as the Circumſtances make it likely.

XV.

XV.

To tell Men's Actions without ſpeaking of their Motives, cannot properly be called to write *Hiſtory*. It is juſt like a *Gazette*, where the Author contents himſelf barely to report the Events of things, without going up to their Spring. As *Cæſar*, who gives meerly his Marches, and his Encampings, without telling their Motives; every thing in his Narration being too plain and open; thô 'tis true he writes only Memoirs. It is then that curious rehearſing of Motives which cauſe Men to Act, by which alone *Hiſtory* it ſelf becomes delicate, and ſuſtains it ſelf chiefly in important Affairs. To ſay things as they are paſs'd, without going to their beginning, is properly to ſtop at the outward part of Things. *Reaſon will have it*, ſays Cicero, (*p*) *that as in Affairs*, *The Motives.*

(*p*) Rerum ratio vult, ut quoniam in rebus magnis conſilia primum, deinde acta, poſtea eventus expectantur; in rebus geſtis declarari, non ſolum quid actum, aut dictum ſit, ſed quomodo, & cum de eventu dicatur, ut cauſæ explicentur omnes, &c. *l.* 2. *de Orat.*

the

the Deſign precedes the Execution; The Hiſtorian gives an Account, not only of Events, but alſo of Cauſes; and that in relating what has been done, he explains how, and for what Reaſon it was done. Tacitus ſays almoſt the ſame thing; that it is important for *Hiſtory*, not only to tell the Events of things, but to diſcover the Ground and Principles of them, and to touch upon the Motives thereof; (q) by this an *Hiſtorian* diſtinguiſhes himſelf, and makes himſelf conſiderable; and nothing is more pleaſing in a Narration, than the Explication of what is ſecret, and of Importance in thoſe Peoples Deſigns and Intentions, whoſe Actions it relates; and *Hiſtory* having nothing more commendable than this, all the little *Hiſtorians*, even of the ſmalleſt Credit, have endeavoured to excell in that way. For, nothing ſtrikes more upon the Curioſity of men, than this, by which they are made to diſcern what is more concealed in mens *Minds*; that is to ſay, the ſecret

(q) Ut non modo caſus eventuſque rerum, ſed ratio etiam, cauſaque noſcantur. 14. *Ann.*

ſecret motions which make them act, even in their ordinary Undertakings. It is only by going up to the Cauſe, that you will ſee the minds of thoſe you ſpeak of; that you'll diſcover the Spirit which makes them act what they are capable of, and that you'll find the Truth by ſearching deeply into their Intentions. But with how many Falſhoods are *Hiſtories* fill'd upon this fair Pretext? And, into how many Errors do unjuſt, falſe, and intereſted *Hiſtorians* daily fall, which abandon themſelves to their Conjectures; diſtribute their own Imaginations to the Publick, to expreſs the Deſigns of thoſe whom they ſpeak of? As for Example; That *Pericles* cauſed the War in *Peloponneſus*, becauſe he lov'd *Aſpaſia*: That *Xerxes* carry'd that dreadful Army, *Hiſtory* tells us, only to eat Figs: That *M. Anthony* loſt the Empire, meerly becauſe he would not part with *Cleopatra*: That *Francis* the Firſt of *France*, carry'd his Armies over

into *Italy*, only upon the account of the faire Lady named *Claricea*. There is nothing more tickliſh and difficult than to ſearch into mens hearts, and thence to gueſs or diſcover what they think; for an Author will tell all he knows, and all that comes into his mind, rather than fail telling the Truth. It is one of the greateſt failings in *Davila*, whoſe Diſcourſes are otherwiſe juſt enough; but his conjectures in the motives of the Actions he relates, do not prove very true, if we may take the Truth from their Fathers. Not but that, after all, an Action very well clear'd to its very Motives, and a Secret well penetrated, might give a great Idea of the *Hiſtorian*'s Ability, and make us judge, that he ſpeaks like a man well inform'd, and looks very well in *Hiſtory*.

But that an Author, (r) who pretends to gueſs, be always up-

(r) Haud facile animus rerum provider, ubi officiunt odium, amicitia, ira, atque miſericordia. *Cæſar. apud Saluſt.* in *Catil.*

on his Guards againſt prejudice; that he hearkens neither to his Affection nor his Hatred; to avoid Artifice, and thoſe Colours men are prompt to give to things, in favour of that ſide he is prejudic'd for; that he inſerts no falſhoods, to juſtifie his Conjectures, and to make things agree with that Air he is pleas'd to give them; that he neither diminiſh nor exaggerate any thing, as *Tacitus*, who caſts a Poiſon every where; or as *Paterculus*, who ſtrows every thing with Flowers. Let him not ſhew men worſe affected than they are, as *Herodotus* does, when he ſays, that the *Perſians* were call'd into *Greece* by the *Spartiates*, becauſe they could reſiſt the *Lacedemonians* no longer, nor ſuffer them, as (*s*) *Plutarch* reproaches him; let him not alſo cover an unjuſt dealing with a good intention, as *Callias* of *Syracuſe*, who juſtifies all the Actions of *Agathocles*, becauſe he did him ſome good, as (*t*) *Diodorus* takes notice; nor as *Paulus Jovius*, in reſpect of *Coſmus*

(*s*) *Plutarch.* de *Herod.* Malig.

(*t*) Excerpta Conſt. ex *Diodoro.*

mus de Medicis, not long ſince. There are in all *Hiſtorians* miſtakes of that kind, becauſe they are few that have a mind ſteddy enough to reſiſt their Prejudice. But thô the motives in great men ought regularly to be better and greater than their Actions; for the motives depend upon them, but the events do not: yet it is but a ſmall miſtake, as Noble men are, to mix in their Counſels, and in their Deliberations part of the pride and of the weakneſs they are ſubject to: for oftentimes it is only through ſome impertinent and ridiculous motives, that the moſt part of men are determin'd. There is an infinite number of Examples thereof, which I leave, that I may not exceed bounds upon that matter. You muſt, above all things, know well the Vanity, the Malice, the Ignorance, and the Folly of mens minds, which always conforms to their Principles, to know well the bottom of their Intentions, and ſearch his Weakneſs,

neſs, which is the great Principle of Malice; and above all things, not to be ignorant, that the Lazineſs of moſt great men, in examining the bottom of Affairs, and the impatience they have to judge of them upon what the Conduct moſt eſſential to their Affairs depends. It is them we muſt neceſſarily know, for being, as they are, the Great Actors upon the Stage of this World, all things, for the moſt part, are rul'd by their Extravagancies: But it does not follow, that if we have done once well in this way, by chance, we ſhould be able to do it always. There are *Hiſtorians* in this Age, which have ruin'd their Reputation by too great an itch of mingling their Conjectures with all Events, and impoſing their own Conceits upon the *Publick* inſtead of *Hiſtory*; as *Herrera*, who ſays, that the Duke of *Parma* did not do the beſt he could againſt the *Hollanders*, to manage them with Policy. There is nothing more contrary to an

Hiſtorian's mind, (who ought to be ſincere and faithful) than thoſe conjectures which are built in the Air, without any Foundation, and all Diſcourſes grounded upon many conjectures, are either uncertain or frivolous. This is what muſt be obſerv'd in Tranſitions, in Circumſtances, and in the Motives wherein the chief Art of a Narration conſiſts. This is alſo what muſt be regarded in its other parts, which are the Figures, the Paſſions, the Deſcriptions, the Speeches, the Reflections, or the Sentences; the Characters of Perſons, the Digreſſions, and all that can enter in the Oeconomy of the Diſcourſe which *Hiſtory* ought to be made of.

XVI.

Figures. *Hiſtory* makes uſe of Figures only to animate it ſelf: The Speaker, who has a mind to impoſe, ſpeaks always by Figures, that the Springs of his Art may play

play the better: but the *Hiſtorian*, whoſe mind is only to inſtruct, ought to uſe them in another way. That very Simplicity which Truth requires in *Hiſtory*, does not take that way of figurating, which would injure its Candor and Ingenuity. *(u) Lucian*, who is admirable every where elſe, is not here ſo much as againſt thoſe vain Ornaments of Eloquence, which are not convenient for *Hiſtory*. If, ſays he, you lay on too many of them, you'll make it like *Hercules*, dreſt with his Miſtreſs's Cloathes; which is the greateſt of all Extravagancies. It is yet leſs capable, continues he, of thoſe clear marks Poetry uſes, to cauſe thoſe motions in mens hearts, by moving the Paſſions. That *Hiſtory* which is candid and ſincere, and does not deſign to impoſe upon me, ought to leave my heart free, to judge the better of what it tells me. Eloquence, which by its Character, is an Art that impoſes, may ſteal upon my Liberty, by ſtriving to

(u) *Luc. de conſcr. Hiſt.*

perſuade me againſt my will. But an *Hiſtory* which fixes it ſelf purely within the Limits of Inſtruction, cannot handſomely make uſe of Figures, no further than to take from th: Diſcourſe its natural coldneſs, and to render it leſs tedious. It is only by theſe means that *Herodotus*, *Toucydides* and *Xenophon*, keep up the Reader's mind: And *Saluſt*, *Livy* and *Mariana*, never uſe Figures to impoſe upon the Publick. *Tacitus* is not ſo ſcrupulous; he looks like a man who thinks of nothing but of dazling your Eyes: The boldneſs of his Metaphors, and of his other Figures, make his Expreſſions troubleſome and too high. (x) *Cæſar* is upon another Extream; It is a Diſcourſe naked, without Figures, unprovided of all Attire. It is not but that a figur'd Expreſſion, made on purpoſe, might pleaſe ſometimes more than proper words, becauſe it makes the Images livelier, and more agreeable to the mind, and gives ſtrength and nobleneſs to the Diſcourſe;

(x) *Cæſar* ſcripſit Commentarios qui nudi ſunt, abſque omni ornatu orationis. *Cic.* in *Brut.*

courſe; and there is a boldneſs of Style, provided it be wiſe and judicious, which is admitted in places that want Life. But for Figures, to be well applied, be ſure they be modeſt and familiar, not taking the flights of Poetry, or high Eloquence; Let them not be, ſays *Lucian*, too bright, nor too elaborate, unleſs in the Deſcription of a Battel, or in a Speech, where an *Hiſtorian* may ſpread the Sails of his Eloquence, without ſoaring too high.

XVII.

The Paſſions.

The Paſſions alſo make one of the great Ornaments of the Narration, when they are on purpoſe, and that they are touch't judiciouſly. The Truth is, that they do not require that heat which ought to accompany the Stage: one muſt give them another Air; for they are not to be acted, but rehearſed. An *Hiſtorian* may make his Diſcourſe paſſionate, but

but he ought not to be paſſionate himſelf. Therefore let him ſtudy men to the bottom, that he may lay open in his own mind the moſt private motions Paſſion is capable of raiſing there, that he may expreſs its trouble and diſorder; and that well applied, is very agreeable in a Narration. *Thucydides* has treated that part better than *Herodotus*; for he is more eloquent, and more pathetick, as (y) *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus* ſays, thô *Herodotus* has ſometimes more life. *Hermogenes* propounds an admirable Model of a tender, affectionate, and paſſionate Narration in the Death of *Panthæa*, Queen of *Suſiana*, which is written in the Seventh Book of *Xenophon's Cyropædia*. It is one of the fineſt places in that Author: All is ſaid in a touching Strain. *Photius* aſſures us, that *Joſephus* has a great Art in his Diſcourſe, to move the Soul by the Paſſions. (z) *Quintillian* affirms, that

(y) *Dionyſ. Halicar.* Epiſt. ad *Pompei.* & de Virt. Serm.

(z) Affectus eos præcipue, qui dulciores ſunt, nemo Hiſtoricorum *Livio* magis commendavit. *Fab.* l. 10. c. 1.

Livy,

Livy, of all *Hiſtorians*, has moſt ſignaliz'd himſelf by thoſe tender and delicate ways, whereby he has entertain'd the ſweeteſt motions of the Soul: *Affectus eos præcipue, qui dulciores ſunt, nemo Hiſtoricorum* Livio *magis commendavit.* Fabius, *l.* 10. *c.* 1. The Rape of the *Sabins*, thoſe tender motions they ſhew'd at that time to take the Arms out of the hands of the *Romans*, their Husbands, and of the *Sabins*, their Fathers; the Death of *Lucretia*; Her Body expoſed to Publick View, to move the People to rebell againſt the *Tarquins*; *Vetturia* at her Son *Cariolanus*'s Feet, to appeaſe his Fury, when he came to beſiege *Rome*; *Virginia* ſtabb'd by her Father; the Conſternation of *Rome*, after the Battel of *Cannæ*; and a thouſand other ſuch things, touch't in his *Hiſtory* by the moſt tender Expreſſions imaginable, are fine Examples thereof. And it is in that *Hiſtorian* you ought to ſtudy the way of treating Paſſions as they ought

ought to be in *Hiſtory*; for he animates himſelf only in the places where heat is requiſite. *Tacitus* does not mind how to manage his heat; he is always paſſionate; and even thoſe Colours he uſes, are always too ſtrong: and becauſe he is ſtill too full in ſome things, and that he does not Copy after Nature, he does not-move ſo much. I ſay nothing of the other *Hiſtorians*, the greateſt number of whom have not underſtood the Paſſions, nor the way they ought to be repreſented in. It is a particular kind of *Rhetorick*, which requires a great Senſe, and a very exact knowledge of Morality. But, if we intend to pleaſe, let us beware of thoſe Dry Narrations, which are void of the moving ſtroaks which Nature requires.

XVIII.

XVIII.

That Affectation which appears in moſt *Hiſtorians*, in making Deſcriptions, has, in a manner, run down its uſe amongſt judicious people. Nothing indeed is more childiſh, than a Deſcription too much poliſh'd in a ſerious *Hiſtory*. Young Authors run headlong into it, without diſtinction: You cannot be too circumſpect in the uſe thereof. The Principle which is obſervable in it, is, That you muſt uſe it no more than is neceſſary to illuſtrate thoſe things, the knowledge whereof is eſſential to what you write. Such is the Deſcription of the *Iſle* of *Capræa*, *lib.* 4. *Annal. Tacit.* For it denotes the Reaſon *Tyberius* had to retire thither toward the latter end of his life, which renders it neceſſary; and being ſhort, eloquent, and poliſh'd, without any Superfluity, one may ſay, that it is as it ought *The Deſcriptions.*

ought to be. The Deſcription (*a*) *Saluſt* made of the place where *Jugurtha* was defeated by *Metellus*, ſerves to make one know the Fight better. You may ſee there the Vertue of the *Roman*, as well as the Experience of the *Numidian* King, by the advantage he had taken in poſſeſſing himſelf of the Hills: and all the recital of the Battel, is better underſtood, by that draught of the place which the *Hiſtorian* lays before your Eyes, as well as the Picture of that place; where *Hannibal* fought *Minucius*, Book 22. *Annal. Livii*, which is a place well touch'd. Deſcriptions might again be allow'd in a great *Hiſtory*, to make the Narration more pleaſing, provided they be fitted well to the purpoſe, and free from that ſuperfluity which commonly accompanies them, when given by young *Hiſtorians*. The deſire they have to ſhew their Parts that way, makes them fall in a pittiful childiſhneſs. Nay, (*b*) *Lucian* finds fault with the

(*a*) *Sal.* in Bello *Jugurt.*

(*b*) *Luc.* de Hiſt. conſcr.

too

too long Deſcription which *Thucidides* makes of the Plague of *Athens*, in the Second Book of his Hiſtory; and he is, perhaps, in the right: for that Author, thô wiſe, runs into a Narration of that Diſeaſe too particular: But that Critick has more reaſon, when he complains of that impertinent *Hiſtorian* of his Time, who took ſo much delight in making great Deſcriptions of Mountains, of Cities, of Battels, which, he ſays, out-do in Coldneſs, all the Snows, and all the Ice of the *North*. And indeed, nothing is colder than a deſcription which is too much ſtudied. The Machines of War us'd by *Cæſar*, are deſcrib'd in his Commentaries, with a way of Circumſtances too great for ſo mecanick a matter as that is. That *Commander*, whoſe Reputation in the knowledge of War, is eſtabliſh'd, ſeems to have a deſire to be thought alſo a good *Engineer*; it looks too much affected for a man ſo judicious. The Deſcription

tion of *Africa*, in the War of *Jugurtha* in *Saluſt*, is too full of Circumſtances. There was no need of ſo many to mark the Limits of the Kingdoms of *Atherbal* and *Jugurtha*, which were then in diſpute: What need was there to deſcribe all that Countrey, and to make a diſtinction of the Manners of the People, with ſo much particularity? Deſcriptions muſt then be uſeful, exact, ſhort, elegant, never ſtudied, having no harſhneſs in them, nor a vain deſire of making your Wit appear more than your Subject, that your Deſcriptions may look well, as thoſe of *Livy* do: 'twere fit you ſhould make him your Pattern.

XIX.

Speeches. I find the Maſters Opinions very much divided in that Point. *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*, have ſignaliz'd themſelves chiefly by their Speeches: *Thucydides*

dides did better than any of them; the Speeches of the chieſeſt Actors in his *Hiſtory*, *Pericles*, *Nicias*, *Alcibiades*, *Archidamus*, and of all the Nations that ſpeak by Deputies, are excellent Leſſons for Speakers of all Ages; and *Demoſthenes* formed himſelf chiefly in that School. *Polybius* uſes more Formalities: he doth not let *Scipio* ſpeak ſo much, thô he has reaſon to do it, having always been his Companion in War; (c) *Cæſar* is ſtill more ſparing; for he makes hardly any Speeches at all, pretending they are againſt the Truth of *Hiſtory*, and taking rather the part of writing bare Memoires, that he may ſeem plainer in his Diſcourſe. *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus* cauſes *Brutus* to make a long Exhortation upon the Death of *Lucretia*, that ſo he might excite the People to Revenge; and that Oration which he makes *Valerius* to ſpeak upon the fitteſt form of Government in a State, Book 7. of his *Hiſtory*, is very tedious.

(c) In Sermonibus effingendis *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, *Saluſtius* nimii videntur: & cauſa eſt cur *Cæſar* Commentarios ſcripſit, ut id omitteret, in quo alii laborant. *Biſciol.* l. 7. hor. ſubceſſ.

Joſephus, *Appian*, *Dio Caſſius*, and *Procopius*, are great Diſcourſers, as well as *Thucydides* and *Xenophon*, which took that Idea of ſpeaking out of *Homer*: And in truth, if we examine the grounds of thoſe Diſcourſes, and, above all, of thoſe that are made by Captains, to encourage the Soldiers to fight, we ſhall find but little likelihood in them. (d) *Trogus* reproaches *Saluſt* and *Livy*, with a great deal of reaſon, for the immoderate exceſs of Speeches in their *Hiſtories*: And indeed all thoſe Diſcourſes they attribute to great men, have but a falſe look: for out of what Memoires could they have taken them? Beſides, a Warrier don't ſpeak like one that makes it his buſineſs to ſpeak in publick. (e) So when *Pericles*, in *Thucydides*, made an Oration in praiſe of his Soldiers that had been defeated and kill'd by the *Bœotians*: His Speech is feigned, as well as that which *Catiline*, in *Saluſt*, makes to the *Conſpirators*, which, in all probability, was

(d) *Trogus* reprehendit in *Livio* & *Saluſtio*, quod Conciones & Orationes operi ſuo inſerendo, hiſtoriæ modum exceſſerint. *Juſt.* l. 38.

(e) *Livium*, *Thucydidem* interſerunt Conciones, quæ nunquam abiis, quibus ſunt attributæ cognitæ fuerunt. *Scal.* Poet. l. 1.

was ſecret, and not much ſtudied. This is partly what (*f*) *Beny* ſays, to improve that miſtake. *Thucydides*, who was judicious, took care of that in his laſt Books, where he makes fewer Speeches than in the firſt. But it is a Natural Leſſon; for we never write an *Hiſtory*, but we bring in thoſe that have a ſhare in it, to make them ſpeak; becauſe nothing gives more vigour to a Narration, which is apt to grow cold by a Diſcourſe too much poliſhed. There is then a *medium* to be taken: A ſmall Diſcourſe made on purpoſe in an *Hiſtory*, by one that bears a Character fit to make it, being alſo well ſuited to the Perſon and Subject under hand, may pleaſe, being put in its due place. But thoſe formal Speeches at the Head of an Army ready to engage, and thoſe Deliberations of a tedious prolixity, which are made upon thoſe buſineſſes that are ſpoken of, are almoſt out of faſhion in good *Hiſtories:* And the

(*f*) *Ben.* l. 2. de Hiſt.

wiſeſt chuſe to make their *Heroe* ſpeak things in few words, without engaging themſelves to ſay ſet Speeches; as *Livy*, in the beginning of his *Hiſtory*, has done by the Embaſſadors which *Romulus* ſent to his Neighbours. The moſt part of *Saluſt*'s Speeches are very fine, but never to the purpoſe; for nothing is finer than *Marius*'s Speech: It is the beſt Moral Lecture in the World upon Nobility; all is reaſonable in it; and Antiquity has few of that Strength, to perſuade People to embrace Vertue; but it is ſet in a wrong place; and the way that he makes *Cato* and *Cæſar* give their Opinion in the *Senate*, how great ſoever it be, is not made proportionable to the reſt of his *Hiſtory*. Of that number is the long Diſcourſe *Dio* makes in the 56*th* Book of his *Hiſtory*, in praiſe of Marriage, and of a Batchelor's Life. But on the contrary, there is nothing firmer than *Tyberius*'s Speech upon the Reformation of *Luxury*, *Tacit. l.* 3. *Annal.* No *Hiſtorian*

ſtorian ever made a Prince ſpeak with more Dignity. The Speeches of *Agrippa* and of *Mæcenas* to *Auguſtus*, wherein the one adviſes him to quit the Empire, and the other to keep it, are extream fine in *Dio Caſſius*; but they are ſo long, that they take up all the 52*d* Book. In fine, to finiſh this Article, I am for (*g*) *Cicero*'s Advice, who ſpeaking of the Diſcourſes of *Thucidides*, ſays wiſely, *I find them very fine, and I could not do ſo well if I would, nor would I do it if I could*; which is all that can be well ſaid upon that Subject; For, in fine, Speakers are always ſubject to be tedious: And *Boccalinus* is very pleaſant, who condemns an Old Man to the Pennance of reading one of *Guichardin*'s Speeches, becauſe he had read a *Madrigall*, with his Spectacles, upon *Mount Parnaſſus*.

(*g*) De *Thucydide* Orationes quas interpoſuit laudare ſoleo: ſed imitari neque poſſim ſi velim, neque velim ſi poſſim. *Cic.* declar. Orat.

XX.

The Characters of Perſons.

Pictures are a great Embelliſhment in *Hiſtory*, when well drawn; but *Romances* have ſpoil'd that way; for we make too many, and thoſe ſuch as do not well reſemble: We loſe time in deſcribing, after our own Fancy, the Air of the Perſon: but this is not the thing *(b)*: For what does it ſignifie to me to know whether *Hannibal* had good Teeth, provided that his *Hiſtorian* ſhew me the greatneſs of his Genius; that he ſhew me a bold and an active Spirit, vaſt Thoughts, a ſtout Heart, and all that animated by an extream Ambition, and ſupported too by a ſtrong Conſtitution, as *(i) Livy* has deſcrib'd it? So *Saluſt* gives me a great Opinion of *Catiline*, by the Picture he makes of him at the beginning of his *Hiſtory*: And when I ſee that deſperate Soldier raiſe Armies in his Cloſet, go up

(*b*) Explicentur hominum ipſorum non ſolum res geſtæ, ſed vita ac natura. *Cic.* l. 2. de Orat.

(*i*) Libr. 21. Annal.

to

to the *Senate* with a Silence that ſhews his Reſolution to affront the Conſul; to hear, unconcern'd, his Invectives; to put *Rome* in Allarm, to make *Italy* tremble; to dare at laſt what no Particular ever durſt; I am not ſurpriz'd, after the Deſcription the *Hiſtorian* has made me of him: I ſee a Man of Reſolution, who ſtirs all things, without being ſeen, becauſe he had taken well his meaſure. *Pompey* is far off with the beſt Troops of the *Commonwealth*; tied by a troubleſome, thô neceſſary War; *Rome* full of Factious People, the Provinces full of Malecontents: there's a general Diſorder in the *Commonwealth*, through a Deluge of Vice which overwhelm'd it; and every thing favours *Catiline*'s Deſign, in the Conjuncture he found of putting it in execution. So one may gueſs what might happen of the War of *Atherbal* and *Jugurtha*, after *Saluſt*'s Deſcription of the Genius's of both; that I know to the bottom *Sylla* and

Marius, according to the Idea he has given me of them, and that I take pleaſure to ſee, iſſuing from their Spring which that *Hiſtorian* has diſcover'd unto me, the Sequel of *Jugurtha*'s great Actions, who gave ſo great diſturbance to the *Romans*, after the Image he has drawn of that Captain. It is in that manner that the Ancients have mix'd in their *Hiſtories* thoſe kind of Pictures of the Perſons they deſign'd to repreſent, to diſtinguiſh them from others; which is of great Ornament in a Piece, when done opportunely: For after a Character is well eſtabliſh'd by thoſe Eſſential Features, which make a diſtinction of it, all goes on a great deal better; all things are better underſtood in the Narration: But it is a Maſter-piece, to hit that Reſemblance, which conſiſts only in ſingular and imperceptible Features, which alone expreſſes Nature, and which one hardly meets with, unleſs he ſearches the hearts, and unwraps all their folds,

folds, that he may well know what is hidden. But what ſtrength of Spirit, and what acuteneſs is requiſite for that purpoſe? Theſe things that follow are to be obſerv'd in it: Firſt, the Picture ought to be real; and this was *Xenophon's* miſcarriage in the Picture he made of *Cyrus*, wherein he gave nothing but the Idea of an *Heroe*. Secondly, it ought to reſemble: in that *Tacitus* has not been exact enough, minding to follow rather his Genius, than to imitate Nature; ſeeking more to make a good Picture, than to give the reſemblance, provided that his Pictures pleaſe; as that of *Sejanus*, *lib.* 4. *Annal.* He cares but little whether they reſemble or not; for he makes him a great deal worſe than he is, if we may believe *Paterculus*, who praiſes him much. Thirdly, an Author ought to make only the Pictures of Perſons of Conſequence: There *Saluſt* miſtook in the Repreſentation of *Sempronia*, who makes but an indifferent Figure

gure in *Catiline*'s Conſpiracy. But althô too much time ought not to be ſpent in painting the External Parts of the Perſon, yet he may do it in ſome caſes, when that may ſerve to make the Genius of thoſe you ſpeak of better underſtood. And indeed there are ſeveral ways of painting: (k) *Livy*, ſpeaking of *Lucretia*, ſo fair to her Husband's Eyes, without mentioning any thing of her Face, paints only her Virtue, and gives in one word, the greateſt Idea that can be given of an honeſt Woman. *Tacitus* paints *Tyberius* only by his Actions; that way he makes him to be known: (l) *Lampridius* makes a right Picture of the Emperour *Heliogabalus*, ſaying, that he ſtifl'd his *Paraſites* in heaps of Flowers, after he had drown'd them with Wine: *Procopius* paints the *Empreſs Theodora* by her Gallantries: A drinking bout is ſufficient to the *Hiſtorian* that writes *Venceſlaus*'s Life, to draw the Picture of that Emperour; who caus'd, ſays he, his

(k) *Lucretiam nocte ſera non in convivio luxuque ſed deditam lanæ inter Ancillas ſedentem inveniunt, l. 1. Annal.*

(l) Oppreſſit in Tricliniis Paraſytos ſuos violis & floribus, ſicut animam aliqui efflaverint, *Lampr. in Helio.*

his Cook to be put upon the Spit, and roaſted, becauſe he had ill roaſted a Pig which that Prince had a mind to eat. But the beſt way of painting, is to diſcover the ſecret motions of the heart, which makes the Perſon better known. It is from thence only that you ought to take thoſe Features which make a diſtinction, that you may give a Character rais'd from its own ground. All the reſt ought to be little accounted of in a ſerious *Hiſtory*, which can endure nothing but what is judicious. I ſhould not like alſo thoſe Pictures which are copied, and taken here and there, as in *Mariana*; thoſe he took out of *Tacitus*: Nor like that of *Walſtein*, in (m) *Sarraſin*, which is made up, for the moſt part, of the fineſt Pictures in Antiquity. You ought not to loſe time in Copies, when you draw after the Life, and when you think of making an Original. After all is done, *Hiſtory* is the faithfulleſt Picture of thoſe you ſpeak

(m) *A French Author, who wrote part of Walſtein's Conſpiracy.*

ſpeak of; nothing ſhewing their Character better than the continuation of their Actions.

XXI.

The Reflections and Sentences.

There is much to be ſaid upon that Article, which makes all the delight of *Hiſtory*, when delicately done: but there are many miſtakes to be avoided in this Point, where you can never uſe too much Simplicity. *Xenophon*, *Polybius*, and *Tacitus*, are full of Reflections; *Thucydides*, *Saluſt*, and *Cæſar*, are more reſerv'd. What Party muſt an Author chuſe amongſt ſo great Examples of ſo different a Conduct, and in ſo important a matter. And, in truth, the Beauty which *Hiſtory* hopes for from that kind of Ornament, requires to be manag'd with exact judgment: For, in fine, a man quits the Character of an *Hiſtorian*, who ought to tell naturally, what he has to ſay, without mingling, *mal à propos*,

poſe, his own Conceits with it, when he moralizes upon all ſorts of things, turning, without diſtinction, the Adventures which offer themſelves, great and ſmall, into curious and Political Reflections. Nothing alſo is more capable of adulterating Truth, or, at leaſt, of perplexing it, than thoſe fine thoughts, which ſome Authors ſhuffle in out of their own brains, and which a Reader often has not Wit enough to diſtinguiſh from the ground of *Hiſtory*. It is then Wiſdom in an Author to have no frivolous Fancies of his own, to play the Philoſopher's part indifferently upon every thing that preſents it ſelf before him; as *Ammianus Marcellinus*, who acts too much like a Philoſopher, by an Affectation of appearing Learned, which is but little underſtood. *Livy* goes on his way, ſtopping at nothing; he ſays what he knows of the things he ſpeaks of, and leaves the Reader at liberty to make Reflections, without preventing him

him with his own: and when he does it, it is only with few words, but Noble and Great; (*n*) as what he ſays of the Crime and Puniſhment of *Appius*, who had ſtollen away *Virginia*. It is a great Gift in an Author, to know how to furniſh his Readers with Matters to apply their Minds to, to draw Conſequences, and to give what Air he pleaſes to the things related. All Readers will have their liberty to think what they pleaſe upon what is preſented to them, without being pre-engag'd; and the uſe of that liberty is one of the greateſt delights he takes in reading. Let us then retrench thoſe deep and abſtracted Reflections, if we mean to pleaſe; not labouring after much Spruceneſs in what we write: Let us be more natural and candid; Let us ſay the Truth, without commenting upon it, if our Wit be ſtrong enough to bear it; Let us, above all things, forbear to moralize upon Fortune, and her Unconſtancies,

(*n*) Deos eſſe non negligere humana, ſuperbiæ & crudelitati, & ſi ſeras, non leves pœnas venire, l. 3. *Annal.*

ſtancies, a thing ſo common in Books; Let us not affect thoſe Sententious Expreſſions, which have too much Gayity and Ornament; Let us renounce thoſe Witticiſms, and falſe Sentiments, which Authors of a ſmall Genius jingle with. If we mix in our Diſcourſe ſome Reflections, let them be as natural as may be, and ſuch as ariſe from the Subject it ſelf; let them never be too fine, nor too elaborate; let them be more ſolid, thô leſs ornamental; let them look more like the Arguments of a wiſe *Politician*, than the Affectation of an Orator; (o) Let him be neither too frequent, nor too looſe, but woven, as one may ſay, in the Body of your Work: In fine, let them never have that lofty look of Reflections, which give an ill Opinion of him that makes them. It is in that that *Tacitus*, *Machiavel*, *Paulus Jovius*, *Davila*, and moſt part of the *Italians* and *Spaniards*, are exceſſive. But let none adventure to make thoſe

(o) Curandum ne ſententiæ emineant extra corpus orationis expreſſæ, *Petr.*

thoſe curious Reflections of *Policy* and *Morality*, unleſs he knows the Man entirely, the Illuſions of his Spirit, and the Weakneſs of his Mind. It is only by that knowledge that good *Hiſtorians* are diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of a middle Rank, as *Plutarch* in his Lives. *Saluſt*, thô unaffected, preaches too much againſt the Corruptions and Ill Manners of his own Time; he is always angry with his Countrey, and always diſſatisfied with the Government: he gives too bad an Opinion of the *Commonwealth*, through his Invectives, and his Reflections upon the Luxury of *Rome*. In truth, thô there is nothing falſe in what he ſays, yet he runs out of his firſt thoughts. So *Davila* would make fewer Speeches, did he but remember that he is an *Hiſtorian*. It is neceſſary to underſtand Morality well, to make juſt Reflections; For true Morality is the ground of good Policy. Therefore *Tacitus*'s Policy is often falſe, becauſe his Morality is not

not true: either he makes Men appear too much corrupted, or he is not candid enough himſelf: There is nothing natural commonly in his Reflections, becauſe nothing is innocent in them; he envenoms, and gives an ill turn to every thing: He has by that means ſpoil'd many People, who imitate him in that Article, not being able to do it in any other. And this muſt be obſerv'd upon the uſe of Reflections in *Hiſtory*. A Sentence may be put in the Mouth of a Character fit to ſpeak Sentences: *Mariana*, as well as *Strada*, do not ſeem to manage that well. People alſo have no great affection for thoſe ſtiff men which never yield to any thing, and who, to make what they ſay ſeem more important, multiply Sentences upon Sentences, Reflections upon Reflections, and by a ridiculous Gravity, will ſeem *Cato*'s in ſmall trifles. The too great ſubtilty in thoſe refinings of Conjecture, is apt to degene-

him with his own: and when he does it, it is only with few words, but Noble and Great; (*n*) as what he ſays of the Crime and Puniſhment of *Appius*, who had ſtollen away *Virginia*. It is a great Gift in an Author, to know how to furniſh his Readers with Matters to apply their Minds to, to draw Conſequences, and to give what Air he pleaſes to the things related. All Readers will have their liberty to think what they pleaſe upon what is preſented to them, without being pre-engag'd; and the uſe of that liberty is one of the greateſt delights he takes in reading. Let us then retrench thoſe deep and abſtracted Reflections, if we mean to pleaſe; not labouring after much Spruceneſs in what we write: Let us be more natural and candid; Let us ſay the Truth, without commenting upon it, if our Wit be ſtrong enough to bear it; Let us, above all things, forbear to moralize upon Fortune, and her Unconſtancies,

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rate in a falſe delicacy; and Reflections are good only when they leaſt appear to be ſo.

XXII.

Digreſſions. Digreſſions have alſo their agreeableneſs, when they are made in fit times, and that they have nothing too wide, nor too looſe, becauſe it gives to a Narration a Variety ſo neceſſary to make it agreeable; but they ought to be wiſely mixed. An Author is apt to err when he goes from his Subject; for one whoſe head is not ſtrong enough changes eaſily; and to quit your matter without precaution, to ſeek Adventures, and carry your Reader abroad, does not belong ſo much to an *Hiſtorian*, as to a Writer of Adventures, who ſticks upon every thing he finds to ſtuff up his Relation. He takes Cities, he fights Battels, he finds Adventures every where; as *Herodotus*, who continually goes from his

his Text, by his too frequent, and often forc'd Digreſſions; thô he took Example by *Homer*, who is indeed a great Maſter; for thô he ſoars often, he goes nevertheleſs ſtrait enough to his Mark, without loſing time in things out of ſeaſon. *Thucydides* has a better Order than *Herodotus*; he confines himſelf ſtrictly to his Subject: The Conſpiracy of *Harmodius* and *Ariſtogyton*, in the Sixth Book, is one of thoſe Narrations wherein he has excell'd moſt. *Xenophon* endeavours to imitate him: If he forgets himſelf ſometimes, as he has done, *lib.* 5. of the *Hiſtory* of *Cyrus*, in the Adventure concerning *Panthæa*, yet that Adventure has a natural Relation to the Body of his Hiſtory; *Panthæa* having been taken by *Cyrus*, in the Overthrow of the *Aſſyrians*, and *Abradatus*, her Husband, by that means coming to *Cyrus's* ſide, and becoming one of the chiefeſt of his Army. The plain Truth is, I would not be reſponſible for

the other Digreſſions of that Author, which are not quite ſo well coupled to his Subject in his other Works. *(p) Polybius* has frequent Digreſſions upon Policy, knowledge of Arms, and upon the Laws of *Hiſtory*, which do not appear very neceſſary: *Saluſt* ſometimes commits the ſame Fault, wherein a Modern Critick blames them both. *Photius* praiſes much the Digreſſion of *Dionyſius Halycarnaſſæus*, *lib. 7.* to deſcribe the Conſequence of *Ariſtodemus*'s Tyranny. The Queſtion about the Phœnix, *lib. 6. Annal. Tacit.* upon the news which came to *Rome*, of a Phœnix which had appear'd in *Egypt*, under the Reign of *Tyberius*, is according to the Rules of a juſt Digreſſion: The Queſtion is examin'd by the ſeveral Opinions of the Naturaliſts upon that Bird; his Qualities, his Shape, all is deſcrib'd there in few words. A Digreſſion of that kind ſet in a due place, is of great Ornament to a Narration, and that helps to ſpur

(p) *Polybius* & *Saluſtius* ita peccarunt, ut nullam unquam veniam impetrarint dum digrediuntur, *&c.* Ex *Sebaſt. Macr.*

ſpur the Curioſity of a Reader, and to rouze his Spirits. Nothing alſo in *Mariana's* Hiſtory contributes ſo much to that Air of greatneſs which it has, as the Art which he has of bringing into it, by way of Digreſſion, all that has happen'd conſiderable in the World, of admirable inefabulous Ages, of remarkables in *Greece*, in *Sicily*, in the *Roman* Empire; a pretty particular Account of the *Commonwealth* of *Carthage*, which is no where elſe better than it is there; the Sieges of *Saguntus* and *Numancia*, the Paſſage of *Hannibal* into *Italy*, the *Series* of Emperours, the Birth of *Chriſtianity*, the Preaching of the Goſpel, the Conqueſts of the *Arabians*, and many other things which look great. He has a Genius which is altogether for great matters, which hangs always ſome way or other to the *Spaniſh Hiſtory*. No *Hiſtorian* ever honour'd his Countrey ſo much by any Work; for he has given his Countrey the Honour of e-

very great thing that was ever done in the World. But as there are but few Spirits ſtrong enough to follow the Stream of an *Hiſtory*, without taking breath, and tying themſelves up to their Subject, without going out of it; ſo there are few *Hiſtorians* but will ſometimes forget themſelves, by doing the contrary in their Digreſſions. I will not take the pains to mark them; they every where occur; nothing being ſcarcer than that exact ſenſe, which knows how to apply it ſelf to its Subject: I ſhall only ſay, that (q) *Livy* has ſhunn'd nothing with more care than thoſe by-ways which led him from his matter, as himſelf declares it, nothing being leſs judicious. But in our *Hiſtorians*, the ſame ridiculous humour may ſtill be found, which (r) *Lucian* met with in his time, in them that wrote the *Parthian* War, who mix'd in their Narrations the fooliſheſt things in the World, to render them more diverting, running from Countrey to

(q) Nihil minus quærendum à principio hujus operis, quam ut plus juſto ab rerum ordine declinarem varietatibuſque diſtinguendo operæ, legentibus veluti diverticula quærerem, *l.* 9. *Annal.*

(r) *Luc.* de Conſcr. Hiſt.

to Countrey, from Age to Age, from one Adventure to another, without any diſtinction. You muſt then lay it down as a certain and indiſpenſable Rule, That Digreſſions ought to be connected always, by ſomewhat or other, to the Principal Subject in hand, as (*s*) that Judicious *Hiſtorian* we ſpoke of juſt now has always done; And you ought to examine well, whether in the bottom they have no natural antipathy; for if they have, they are not fit to be us'd; for nothing is more eſſential to the Digreſſion, than the Affinity it ought to have with the Subject: The great Secret is, to know exactly how far it ought to go; for it has its Natural Limits, which are not to be paſſed. That which renders the Proportion difficult, is, that the Extent of them ought not always to be the ſame; for it muſt be great or ſmall, more or leſs, according to the Relation it has to the chief part of *Hiſtory*; and the making a right Judgment here, is the

(*s*) Statuit non attingere externa, niſi qua Romanis cohærent rebus, *Luc.* l. 39. *Annal.*

Rock upon which all *Hiſtorians* daſh; for there are few which in their Digreſſions exceed not due bounds, it being the greateſt difficulty to keep them exactly, and to rule themſelves. In that there is a great deal to be ſaid againſt *Mariana*, who in the beginning of his *Hiſtory* has taken many ways to arrive at his Point: He has need of an *Apology* upon that, which I do not pretend to juſtifie him in. The only Model a Writer may propoſe to himſelf in this, is (t) *Livy*, who would not have left the *Roman Hiſtory* to tell his Mind upon the Succeſs of *Alexander*'s Arms, had he come into *Italy*, without great precautions, and ſatisfying the Reader's mind with ample Excuſes: The Diſcourſe he makes upon it is very curious, and not at all out of ſeaſon.

(t) Ut quærere libeat qui eventus *Romanis* Rebus, ſi cum *Alexandro* foret bellatum, futurus fuerit, *Annal. l. 9.*

XXIII.

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Hiſtory ought to be Eloquent, and not tedious: In that only its Art conſiſts; that is its common Effect. But there is an extraordinary Effect, known but by few people, to ſay nothing, thô true, but what has the Air of Truth, to gain Credit in the moſt difficult things to be believed. Eloquence, which knows how to give to things the Air which may render them acceptable, ought to be employ'd about it. And the ſetting of things in that admirable Order, which makes them probable, is its chiefeſt work; The Matter is given to the *Hiſtorian* in *Memoires*, which People furniſh him with; but it is his buſineſs to lay them together, and to do it well: He muſt not think ſo much what he ſays, as to the manner of ſaying it; for in this, as in all other parts of Eloquence, the Method

Eloquence fit in Hiſtory.

is

is all; That is properly the uſe the *Hiſtorian* ought to make of Eloquence, which alone ſets every thing in its place. It is the great Artifice of *Thucydides*, ſays *(u) Cicero*, which has ſurpaſs'd all the other *Hiſtorians* by his Eloquence. *(w) Quintillian* ſpeaks of that of *Livy* with admiration. It is only by that admirable Quality that thoſe Two Great Men have diſtinguiſh'd themſelves ſo much from the Commonalty of other *Hiſtorians*; for it is Eloquence which gives a man the way of explaining himſelf. He perſuades beſt, who explains himſelf in the eaſieſt manner; it is perſuaſion only which gives to things that colour of Truth, which they have by no other way but by that turn which is given them, and by the light they are ſet in. So nothing is more eloquent than the Picture *Saluſt* makes of the Condition which *Rome* was in, when *Catiline* took up the Deſign of making himſelf Maſter of it: And when that admirable Au-

(u) Thucydides omnes dicendi artificio vincit, *Cic.* l. 2. de Orat.

(w) Tito Livio miræ facundiæ viro, *Fab.* l. 8. c. 1.

Author repreſents the *Common-wealth* corrupted through Luxury and Avarice, weakned under the weight of its own greatneſs; they are the fineſt Expreſſions which can be found in *Hiſtory*: It is in thoſe Images your Art muſt ſhew it ſelf, if you have any; and the *Hiſtorians* of the firſt Rate are full of them. It is that Eloquence which ought to be mix'd with *Hiſtory*, to animate it with its flame and Spirit; for without it all is but languiſhing: and thoſe ſeveral turns one ought to embelliſh a Narration with, to make it agreeable; all the Art of Tranſitions, thoſe ſo tender and paſſionate motions which go to the heart, that Connexion of the moſt Memorable Actions; that ordering of Circumſtances, and thoſe Embelliſhments which raiſe the Admiration, are nothing but the Effects of that ſingular Eloquence which is proper to *Hiſtory*, which ought ſometimes to raiſe it ſelf, and ſoar aloft, when oc-

occaſion requires it. But it is the Effect of an *Hiſtorian*'s Judgment, to diſtinguiſh thoſe places. A kind of Eloquence did rule over the *Greeks* and the *Romans* too, in the Speeches of thoſe which were to ſpeak, which was only meer Oſtentation, ſhewing the Wit of the *Hiſtorian*, rather than the Truth of *Hiſtory*; and in that the Authors thought rather to amuſe the people, than to inſtruct them. That Eloquence is out of faſhion among the wiſe Moderns, becauſe it had an affected way; and thoſe who have any Judgment, love only what is natural. The Prefaces of (x) *Saluſt*, which are great Diſcourſes, full of Senſe, and very Eloquent, ſeem to me of that kind; They are common places, without any reference to his *Hiſtory*. That Author, perhaps, had ſome Reſerve, which he made uſe of in times of need; as (y) *Tully* did, according to his own Confeſſion. I have always, ſays he, a Volume of Prefaces ready againſt I have

(x) *Saluſtius* in bello *Jugurthino* & *Catilinario* nihil ad Hiſtoriam pertinentibus principiis uſus eſt, *Fab.* l. 10. c. 8.

(y) Habeo Volumen proemiorum, ex eo eligere ſoleo cum aliquod σύγγραμμα inſtituo, ad *Atticum* l. 16. *ep* 6.

have need of 'em. I would not have ſuſpected him of ſo much precaution, had not he himſelf bragg'd of it. That may be good for an Orator that ſpeaks always publickly, and has not always leiſure to prepare himſelf; but it is not to be endur'd in *Hiſtory*, where the Author is Maſter both of himſelf and his Time: For, to conclude, all thoſe Diſcourſes, thô never ſo fine of themſelves, ceaſe to be ſo, as ſoon as they are out of their places, and as ſoon as any Affectation appears: And this is what may be ſaid upon the Eloquence of *Hiſtory*.

XXIV.

The other Ornaments which one may apply in Hiſtory.

There may alſo be other Ornaments fit to be put in *Hiſtory*, to make it more pleaſant, either when it is dull, and when it is too plain, by over-long Narrations, which are too much like one another: but, of thoſe Ornaments,

naments, the moſt apparent are not always the moſt eſſential: *All is not Gold that glitters.* A Mind that is bridled up does not take delight in too much finery; and that ought to engage a Learned Man to manage thoſe Ornaments without Prodigality, and accommodate himſelf to mens Capacity, which too great a brightneſs dazles; beſides that thoſe Ornaments crowded one upon another, ſurpriſe more than they pleaſe. There are hidden ones, which give greater ſatisfaction to curious people; and thô they eſcape others notice, they do not eſcape theirs; you may every moment diſcover new Charms which uphold them, and which are laſting, more than thoſe which give but a glaunce, and die. Thoſe kind of Ornaments conſiſt ſometimes of eloquent or witty turns, which in a mann r are ſurpriſing, and caſt an unlook'd for Effect on the places they are put in; whereof here

are ſome Examples: *Porſenna*, King of *Cluſium*, beſieges *Rome*: *C. Mutius*, mov'd with the danger he ſees his Countrey in by ſo cloſe a Siege, goes into *Porſenna*'s Camp, kills his Secretary cloſe by him, thinking to have kill'd him: The Murtherer is ſeis'd; they order a Pan of fire to be brought, to force him to declare his Aſſociates by the Torment of the fire. That Young Man, full of Courage, in cold Blood, puts his hand in the fire, and without any alteration in his Countenance, let it be quite burnt upon the hot Embers; ſpeaking in this manner to the King: (z) *See* how *thoſe that are poſſeſt with true Glory, deſpiſe their own Carcaſs.* That ſpoken with a firm Countenance, alters the face of things; the Murtherer, thô abominable and odious, caſts an admiration on the Spirits of them that were preſent; they look upon him with Reſpect, and they ſend him home with Praiſes, in the ſame moment that they were pre-

(z) Sentias quam vile corpus ſit iis, quĩ magnam gloriam vident. *Tit. Liv. l. 2. Annal.*

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(z) Sentias quam vile corpus ſit iis, quĩ magnam gloriam vident. *Tit. Liv. l. 2. Annal.*

preparing to make him end his Life in cruel Tortures. A reſolute word only makes that change; and ſuch a word well plac'd, is a great Ornament in a Narration, and has a marvellous Effect. So upon *Fabius*'s retaking *Tarentum*, *Hannibal*, thô vanquiſh'd, ſpoke this fine Saying, which look'd as thô he had ſtill been victorious, praiſing himſelf, to raiſe his Enemy the more: * *The Romans, ſaid he, have alſo at laſt their Hannibal.* That was a proud way of ſubmitting himſelf. Thoſe ſayings are frequent in that *Hiſtorian*. Nothing alſo gives more the Idea of thoſe who ſpeak ſo, when they ſpeak well, nor of him that makes them ſpeak, as when he does it on purpoſe. Here is one of another kind, taken out of *Tacitus*, in that famous Feaſt *Maſſalina* made to her Lover: In the heat of the rejoicing, and of the Debauchery of that Feaſt, they got an Idiot, whoſe Name was *Valens*, to climb up to the top

* Et *Romani* ſuum habent *Annibalem*, l. 27. Annal.

top of a Tree; and they asked him what he ſaw: *A Tempeſt, ſaid he, which gathers in the Air, and comes from Oſtium.* That word, ſpoken by a Fool, caſt a coldneſs and ſorrow upon the People's Spirits, which diſturb'd all things, thô ſpoken without deſign; for it was a Prognoſtication of the *Emperour*'s return, which happen'd a few days after, and caus'd the *Empreſs* to be ſtabb'd, tir'd with her infamous Life. Thoſe marvellous ſayings are very acceptable in *Hiſtory*, being fit to rouze up the Reader's Mind by ſomething which is ſharp. There are Thouſands of others which an *Hiſtorian* employs to embelliſh his Work, and which have eſcap'd my Memory: and I do not pretend to ſay all that is good in this kind. It is enough to mark thoſe which can give another face to Affairs; to ſearch other Conjectures, to give way to other Idea's, and to other Sentiments: In a word, all thoſe fine ſayings, capable of cauſing ſome kind of

revolution in the Reader's Mind, to give him Action, and Motion too, being always truly fine, are never out of uſe. The buſineſs is to place them ſo, that they may appear incorporated in a Narration, to play all their part in it; that is to ſay, to make the matter pleaſant, when, of it ſelf, it is barren and diſagreeable.

XXV.

The Sentiments which ought to be allow'd in Hiſtory.

There are Sentiments which are fit for the Theatre, and are not ſo for *Hiſtory*, becauſe Poetry ſays things as they ſhould be; *Hiſtory* ſays them as they are. So thoſe *Hiſtorians*, which give their *Heroes* ſuch exquiſite Sentiments, are not always the moſt judicious; and whatever is not grounded upon good ſenſe, be it never ſo fine, is not the beſt. So that *Quintus Curtius* is not always in the right, to repreſent *Alexander* ſo admirable. He does not make

make him act by the meaſure of Prudence, but always puts him upon difficult and perillous Adventures: Danger charms him; He is not fond of Conqueſts, but of the Glory of Conquering: He might ſurpriſe *Darius*, by falling upon him in the Night-time, and that way hide his Weakneſs, the Enemies Army being twice in number bigger than his own: But that Great Man, who cares leſs to overcome, than to make People admire his Bravery, attacks the King of *Perſia* in the middle of the Day; reſolved rather to loſe his Life glorioufly, than to overcome by ſurpriſal. *Darius*, after his Overthrow, proffers to divide *Aſia* with him, and offers him his Daughter in Marriage; *Alexander* chuſes rather to purſue his Honour through Perils, than to become Maſter with ſo much Tranquility: He does not hearken to thoſe Propoſals; he will accept of nothing but what is extraordinary. His *Hiſtorian* does

him a great deal of Honour: ſure, a little likelihood would have done well mixt with ſo much Glory: Does not he make his *Heroe* more Fool-hardy than wiſe, and more adventurous than ambitious? Without doubt he found that way finer; but withall, he has given us reaſon to doubt, whether it is a *Romance*, or an *Hiſtory*, which he has left us; for he puſhes things too far. So important it is for an Author in all things to make Reaſon his Standard, and to follow rather the Nature of things, than the fine Imaginations of his own Wit. Let not *Hiſtory* then authorize the ridiculous Conceits of falſe Glory, which cauſes vain People to commit ſo many Errors, the moſt part of which contributes little to true Honour, becauſe they have no ſenſe of it. Let it not attribute to a *Mountebank* the Sentiments of a ſolid man, nor the Vertues of a *Romantick Heroe* to a true Knight. Great men are ſubject to form

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to themſelves Idea's of Glory, after their own fancy, and according to the failing of their Vanity. But the Publick Intereſt ought to be dearer to him who governs, than his own Glory: And the true Honour of a great Prince, is to gain the People's Hearts rather than their Fears. Thoſe are the Sentiments which ought to reign moſt in *Hiſtory*, that it may become a Leſſon of Clemency to Princes, and a Pattern of Reaſon and good Senſe to all People. Let not an *Hiſtorian* therefore be miſtaken; let him firſt diſtinguiſh true Honour from falſe; and in the Maxims of this Life praiſe only what is good; Let him clear the Peoples Errors, without becoming himſelf a Slave to Popular Sentiments: Let him never ſuffer himſelf to judge of things by their Events, without running up to their Spring; but let him open their very Principles: Let him be careful of doing Juſtice to the true and pretended Merit, that

he may not impoſe on Poſterity, which gives Credit to what is ſaid, without any examination, and ſticks to the Litteral Senſe: Let him never ſhew great Events, without giving notice of Cauſes, and without diſcovering their true Motives. Sometimes it is nothing, or at leaſt, but little; but People lack to ſee great things come from ſmall Principles, as *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* teaches in the Fifth Book of his *Hiſtory*, on the occaſion of the Revolution of Government from the Kings of *Rome*, which happen'd through the Inſolence of Young * *Tarquin*, and the Pride of his Father. That is the Spirit which ought to reign in *Hiſtory*, and the Maxim which muſt be obſerv'd therein. Let us ſee its Genius.

* *T. Liv.* l. 1. Ann.

XXVI.

XXVI.

How the Genius of an Hiſtorian muſt be.

Nothing can be writ conſiderable in *Hiſtory*, without a Genius; that makes all in that Art, as well as in others; and it is only that way that *Hiſtorians* diſtinguiſh themſelves from one another. A ſmall Genius will make but little of a great Subject; and he that has a great Genius, will make a ſmall Subject appear great. * To write *Hiſtory* well therefore, a man muſt have an univerſal Genius, capable of great Idea's, to form to himſelf a great Model, and great Deſigns. *Hiſtory* is a thing of importance †, ſays *Cicero*, and the buſineſs of a Man above the Common Level. And when *Lucian*, who was one of the fineſt Wits of his Age, which produc'd ſo many great men, confeſſes, that his Genius was too weak for *Hiſtory*, and to attain to that Perfection which it requires. He frights me, by creating

* Arduum videtur res geſtas ſcribere, quod facta dictis exæquanda ſunt, *Saluſt.* proem. Bell. *Catil.*

† Magnum quid Hiſtoriam recte ſcribere, & ſummis Oratoris proprium, *Cic.* l. 2. de Orat.

him a great deal of Honour: ſure, a little likelihood would have done well mixt with ſo much Glory: Does not he make his *Heroe* more Fool-hardy than wiſe, and more adventurous than ambitious? Without doubt he found that way finer; but withall, he has given us reaſon to doubt, whether it is a *Romance*, or an *Hiſtory*, which he has left us; for he puſhes things too far. So important it is for an Author in all things to make Reaſon his Standard, and to follow rather the Nature of things, than the fine Imaginations of his own Wit. Let not *Hiſtory* then authorize the ridiculous Conceits of falſe Glory, which cauſes vain People to commit ſo many Errors, the moſt part of which contributes little to true Honour, becauſe they have no ſenſe of it. Let it not attribute to a *Mountebank* the Sentiments of a ſolid man, nor the Vertues of a *Romantick Heroe* to a true Knight. Great men are ſubject to form

to

to themſelves Idea's of Glory, after their own fancy, and according to the failing of their Vanity. But the Publick Intereſt ought to be dearer to him who governs, than his own Glory: And the true Honour of a great Prince, is to gain the People's Hearts rather than their Fears. Thoſe are the Sentiments which ought to reign moſt in *Hiſtory*, that it may become a Leſſon of Clemency to Princes, and a Pattern of Reaſon and good Senſe to all People. Let not an *Hiſtorian* therefore be miſtaken; let him firſt diſtinguiſh true Honour from falſe; and in the Maxims of this Life praiſe only what is good; Let him clear the Peoples Errors, without becoming himſelf a Slave to Popular Sentiments: Let him never ſuffer himſelf to judge of things by their Events, without running up to their Spring; but let him open their very Principles: Let him be careful of doing Juſtice to the true and pretended Merit, that

he may not impoſe on Poſterity, which gives Credit to what is ſaid, without any examination, and ſticks to the Litteral Senſe: Let him never ſhew great Events, without giving notice of Cauſes, and without diſcovering their true Motives. Sometimes it is nothing, or at leaſt, but little; but People lack to ſee great things come from ſmall Principles, as *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* teaches in the Fifth Book of his *Hiſtory*, on the occaſion of the Revolution of Government from the Kings of *Rome*, which happen'd through the Inſolence of Young * *Tarquin*, and the Pride of his Father. That is the Spirit which ought to reign in *Hiſtory*, and the Maxim which muſt be obſerv'd therein. Let us ſee its Genius.

* *T. Liv. l. 1. Ann.*

XXVI.

XXVI.

Nothing can be writ conſiderable in *Hiſtory*, without a Genius; that makes all in that Art, as well as in others; and it is only that way that *Hiſtorians* diſtinguiſh themſelves from one another. A ſmall Genius will make but little of a great Subject; and he that has a great Genius, will make a ſmall Subject appear great. * To write *Hiſtory* well therefore, a man muſt have an univerſal Genius, capable of great Idea's, to form to himſelf a great Model, and great Deſigns. *Hiſtory* is a thing of importance †, ſays *Cicero*, and the buſineſs of a Man above the Common Level. And when *Lucian*, who was one of the fineſt Wits of his Age, which produc'd ſo many great men, confeſſes, that his Genius was too weak for *Hiſtory*, and to attain to that Perfection which it requires. He frights me, by creating

How the Genius of an Hiſtorian muſt be.

* Arduum videtur res geſtas ſcribere, quod facta dictis exæquanda ſunt, *Saluſt.* proem. Bell. *Catil.*

† Magnum quid Hiſtoriam recte ſcribere, & ſummis Oratoris proprium, *Cic.* l. 2. de Orat.

ating in me a juſt apprehenſion of the difficulty which attends it: For if that Author, which has written nothing but what is admirable, and gives Rules ſo full of good ſenſe for the writing of *Hiſtory*, acknowledges that he is not capable of ſuſtaining the weight of ſo great a work, what will become of thoſe that in one day ſet up for *Hiſtorians*, without any knowledge of what is Eſſential in *Hiſtory*, as he ſays it happen'd in that War in *Armenia*, which produc'd ſo many Authors, through an Itch of writing, which at that time was a common Diſeaſe? But the Times are chang'd, ſays he; nothing is more difficult than for a man to compile a Work which all future Ages may eſteem, as *Thucydides* has done. For what ſtrength of Spirit is requiſite to ſpeak the Truth, without making Paraphraſes, as thoſe do, who have not Souls great enough to be clear and candid, and to ſpeak things as they are? What firm-

firmneſs to unmask Vice, naturally diſguis'd with Diſſimulation? What Sagacity to diſcover the bottom of the Genius of them we ſpeak of, without ſticking to the exterior part of the Perſon, which ſeldom ſignifies any thing? But when the buſineſs is to diſtinguiſh People and Times by what is eſſential in their Characters, how neceſſary is a clear and diſtinguiſhing head? As for Example, in relating the Civil Wars of *Rome*, not to confound the Spirit of the *Commonwealth* with that of *Monarchy*; the abſoluteneſs of the one with the Dependency of the other; not to write the Reign of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, which is no way addicted to Superſtition, like that of *Lewis* the Eleventh, whoſe Character was Superſtition it ſelf; not to repreſent *Charles the Great*, like *Henry* the Third, but to mark the Times and the Perſons by the difference there is between them. What integrity, exactly to do Juſtice to Vice and Virtue,

Virtue, to diſtinguiſh the true from the pretended Merit, and to uſe ones ſelf to weigh the Actions, without any regard to the Perſons? What Judgment, to take always the right ſide, to turn things to the right ſenſe, to chuſe always what is moſt ſolid; to interpoſe your Judgement upon the matter in agitation, without forcing the Reader, by any prejudices, to touch tender Points with that niceneſs of Wit which can only be the Effect of an exquiſite ſenſe; not to load your Diſcourſe with too much Matter, which might chance to ſpoil the Spirit of it; without giving way to any Reflection whatſoever, made either by you, or any other Reader; to know how to find the true knot in every buſineſs, without miſtaking your ſelf in its explanation; not to deliver great Actions upon frivolous Motives; not to hide falſe Thoughts under a florid Expreſſion; to avoid any thing which ſeems ſtudied and forc'd, and to follow

follow in all things that beam of light and underſtanding which gives an Idea of the diſcerning Faculty of the *Hiſtorian*, by giving a good Opinion of his Capacities. So that the moſt neceſſary part in *Hiſtory* is Judgment. An *Orator* may forget himſelf in the flights of his Eloquence, and venture bold ſtroaks, which may paſs upon a multitude of People, who are pleas'd with nothing more than boldneſs. A *Poet* may ramble from his *Text*, and has no great neceſſity to be always wiſe. The *Hiſtorian*, who ſpeaks only in cold Blood, ought always to be Maſter of himſelf, and to ſay nothing but what is juſt. nothing, in fine, requires ſo much Senſe, ſo much Reaſon, ſo much Wit and Judgment, and ſo many other Qualities, to attain to perfection, as *Hiſtory*; and after all is done, an happy Underſtanding, endued with all thoſe Perfections, is not ſufficient, without a great knowledge of the World. It was only the Converſation

verſation *Polybius* had with *Scipio* and *Lelius*, that made him ſo able an *Hiſtorian*. We have in *Thucydides* and *Livy* accompliſh'd Patterns of that Genius requir'd in *Hiſtory*. Antiquity has nothing more finiſh'd in that kind. There is hardly any thing wanting in the one, or in the other, but that *Thucydides* is yet more ſincere than *Livy*, and the laſt more natural than the firſt. *Tacitus* is admirable in his way; *Lipſius* prefers him before all others: Every body is not of his Opinion. One may ſay in general, That he is an *Hiſtorian* of a particular Rank, who has a great deal of agreeableneſs amongſt great failings; but his defects are ſomewhat hidden under a greatneſs of Genius which ſhines in all he ſays, and under a loftineſs not well to be deſcrib'd, which raiſe him above many Authors more exact, and more natural than himſelf. He has his Party and his Admirers. It is true, that he pleaſes men of Fancy and Imagination,

gination, but not thoſe that have moſt Judgment, nor thoſe that love good Senſe rather than Flouriſhes. Among Moderns, I find *Mariana*, *Davila*, *Fra Paolo*, have an admirable Genius for *Hiſtory*. *Mariana* has the gift of thinking, and of ſaying nobly what he thinks and ſpeaks, and of giving a Character of greatneſs to what runs in his Mind. *Davila* brings good Circumſtances of things, diſcourſes juſtly enough upon the Subjects he treats of, and carries on his Diſcourſe in a continued Strain, which gives him that obliging Air which he has above others. *Fra Paolo*, in his *Hiſtory* of the *Council* of *Trent*, gives what Colours he pleaſes to what he ſays: No body ever had that Art in a more eminent degree. He ſhews alſo a great Capacity, in ſearching to the bottom the Matters of Learning which he has in hand, to give his Readers a perfect knowledge thereof: No body ever writ with more Skill, nor with more

more Wit, and never with leſs Juſtice and Truth. He is a paſſionate man, who employ'd all his Art in hiding his Paſſion: He made a jeſt in every thing, that he might not be thought to be angry; but he falls into another Defect: He raileth too much, in a Subject ſo ſerious as his is; for his Paſſion is ſeen in every thing he ſpeaks. So that *Hiſtorian*, with his great Genius, has the moſt Vicious Character that can be in the way of writing *Hiſtory*, where nothing is leſs pardonable than Enmity. An *Hiſtorian* is no longer believ'd, when once he is thought too paſſionate; which gives occaſion of examining the Honeſty which is neceſſary for him that pretends to write.

XXVII.

XXVII.

As every one ought to lay down to himſelf a Rule of Morality, according to his Genius, the *Hiſtorian*'s Mind is known by his Principles. You muſt firſt of all take it for granted, that there are but few who have hearts noble enough, neither to fear nor hope for any thing; and who will value Truth above Intereſt, which is the moſt general Spring of all the wrong Judgments men make in things they ſpeak of. This is what you ought to think upon firſt, when you take upon you to inſtruct the Publick; and it is the chiefeſt Maxim an *Hiſtorian* ought to propoſe to himſelf. That being well eſtabliſh'd, he ought to think only to get Credit in People's good Opinion, and to give a Colour of Truth to all he ſays. It is that chiefly to which all his endeavours ought to tend; which he

The Hiſtorians Morality.

he will never effect, but by eſtabliſhing his Reputation: And it is not by Proteſtations of being ſincere, that he ſhall demonſtrate his Integrity: It is by making appear in all his words, the uprightneſs of his heart, and the honeſty of his mind. Therefore nothing ought to come from him but what has the ſtamp of Equity and Reaſon. The Love he ought to have for Truth, ought to be the Rules of all his Expreſſions, and of all his Idea's. * Let him always ſpeak like an honeſt man; let him never ſpeak any thing that can injure Chaſtity or Integrity; let him keep cloſe to the Sentiments which the ſevereſt Honour can inſpire; and let nothing ever appear in his words that may raiſe a queſtion of his Probity and Truth; let him ſpeak ſo that People may believe him to ſpeak true as often as he ſpeaks, through an aſſurance, that he is not capable of impoſing. No man can ever err with ſo good Principles. It is

* Ne qua ſuſpicio gratiæ ſit, ne qua ſimulatris, *Cic. de Orat.*

is by ſo pure a Method that *Thucydides* did ſet up the Reputation of his ſincerity through all following Ages, and that he has deſerv'd the Credit of all People. It is his Zeal for Religion, and Reſpect for the Gods, which appears in all *Xenophon*'s Books, that engages People not to queſtion what he ſays, being perſuaded, that a man, who has the Love of Piety ſo deeply engraven in his heart, cannot lye. *Polybius* takes more liberty: He relates, as Fables, the Sentiments People had of the Gods, and of Hell; thinking, that way, to deſtroy them. And it is rather by his Honeſty that *Livy* perſuades, than by his great Capacity: through all the Intrigues, Intereſts, Paſſions, and other Extravagancies of thoſe men he ſpeaks of, there appears a Probity, which ſhews him as well honeſt as a good *Hiſtorian*. One may perceive in the moſt hidden parts of the Hearts of thoſe he deſcribes, the bottom of his own; and amongſt the falſe

lights he diſcovers in their Conduct, he never has any falſe aims; he judges of all things rightly, his Judgment being as true as his Intentions are juſt. *Tacitus* is not of that Character; he is a great ſhuffler, who hides a very bad Mind under a very great Wit: he miſtakes always true Merit, becauſe he hardly knows any other than that of Ability; and it is Policy more than Truth, makes him ſpeak, beſides his want of Charity towards his Neighbour: When he ſpeaks of the Gods, he ſhews neither Piety nor Religion, as is ſeen in his Diſcourſe upon Fate againſt Providence, *lib. 6. Annal.* and imputes all things to Fortune, and the Stars, concerning *Traſullus*, Aſtrologer to *Tyberius*, who was become his Secretary at *Capræa*. So difficult it is for an ill man to be a good *Hiſtorian*; for they are almoſt the ſame Principles of the one and of the other. So when an Author takes his Pen, he takes upon himſelf the

the Character of a Publick Man; and he ſtrips himſelf of that Honour, whenſoever he takes up the Sentiments of a Private Perſon, to regard himſelf, and to revenge his own quarrels; as *Procopius*, who being diſſatisfied with the *Emperour Juſtinian*, and the Empreſs *Theodora*, gives way to his own Paſſion, and corrupts Truth: Or, to follow private prejudices, as *Euſebius* and *Theodorite*, which made uſe of their *Hiſtories* to eſtabliſh their own Errors: Or, to flatter thoſe whom you mean to pleaſe, as *Buchanan*, who in his *Hiſtory* of *Scotland*, blemiſhes the Honour of *Mary*, to gratifie Queen *Elizabeth*; and as *Fra Paolo*, who makes his *Hiſtory* of the *Council* of *Trent* a Satyr againſt the *Church* of *Rome*, and Religion; where he ſhews a Chain of Invectives upon Invectives, to revenge himſelf upon the Pope, becauſe he had not made him a Cardinal, after the hopes he had given him of it. *Paulus Jovius* was a man that

purſued his Intereſts, Penſioner to *Charles* the Fifth, unjuſt, malicious, a great Flatterer: The Pictures he made of the moſt conſiderable Perſons in his *Hiſtory*, are Pieces which he pick'd up to compoſe the Lives of Illuſtrious Men, on purpoſe to get Money; they are done according as he was pay'd for them. *Guichardin* is angry with *France*; *Sandoval* makes *Charles* the Fifth a moſt Catholick Prince, whilſt that Monarch foments *Hereſie* in *Germany*: all this becauſe *Paulus* the Third had vex'd him. *Cabrera* praiſes *Philip* the Second for his Piety, who favour'd *Elizabeth* againſt *Mary* of *Scotland*, which he hindred from being Queen, becauſe ſhe favour'd the *French*; and ſo overthrew the Catholick Religion in *England*. *Herrera* is a *Fanfaroon*, and is partial to his Nation. In fine, there are hardly any *Hiſtorians*, but have their own Inclinations and Averſions: It goes hard with them to alter their Sentiments, and

and they make *Elogiums* by Directions, or Satyrs, as their own Minds are diſpoſed. There are but few like *Thucydides*, who by a Principle of Right and Equity, praiſes *Pericles*, as he deſerves, thô he had us'd him very ill; and does always Juſtice to the *Athenians*, who baniſhed him to *Thracia*, where he died. It is a man without Paſſions, who propoſes to himſelf only the Judgment of Poſterity, for the Mark he aims at, and his Work, and who has no other deſire than that of Truth; wherein he is an honeſter man than all others; for he never renounces his Probity. *Livy* favours *Pompey* more than *Cæſar*, *Dio* favours *Cæſar* more than *Pompey*. *Ammianus Marcellinus* is an everlaſting Worſhipper of *Julian* the *Apoſtate*, but cries out always againſt *Valentinian*, his Succeſſor, becauſe he was a Chriſtian. *Euſebius* never ſhews *Conſtantine* but on the right ſide; *Zozimus* ſhews him always the other way. *Procopius* made

Marcellin. in ejus Vita.

his Idol of *Bellizary*, *Egynhart* of *Charles the Great*, *Sandoval* of *Charles* the Fifth, *Strada* of *Alexander Farneze:* In a word, each *Hiſtorian* makes himſelf an *Heroe* after his own palate, whom he looks upon as his Creature; and that he might make him appear the better, he ſtudies to make him more admirable. It is this which renders moſt *Hiſtoaies* ſuſpicious, all *Hiſtorians* being paſſionate; and there being hardly any ſincere ones, becauſe there are few diſintereſted. Thoſe that are above Intereſt, let themſelves be blinded with the deſire of pleaſing; and the care they have of their Reputation, leads them into other Extreams. * *Joſephus* in the *Hiſtory* of the *Jews*, ſuppreſſes true Miracles, to manage the *Gentiles*, who would not have believ'd them; and ſuppoſes things leſs true, becauſe he thought them fitter for the palates, and according to their

* *Joſephus* non tam ſtudebat vera ſcribere, quam credibilia: hac cauſa fuit cur præterierit miracula, quod apud Infideles fidem non erant habitum, & narravit fabulas, quas putavit iis magis probabiles futuras. *Leo Caſſ.* diſp. de tranſl. ſacr. leg. *c.* 36.

ap-

apprehenſion. An *Hiſtorian* ruins himſelf, if he thinks to be eſtabliſh'd that way: you muſt ſay things as they are; woe to the unbelievers: For nothing is worſe in a man who profeſſes to give an account of Truth to the Publick, than to profane it thus. In fine, let nothing ſlaviſh appear, nor of Cowardice, in the Sentiments or Inclinations of the *Hiſtorian*; for nothing gives a worſe Opinion of his Probity. But thô I do not approve the Flatterers of Great men, as *Euſebius*, who ſhews nothing in *Conſtantine* but what deſerves praiſes, who nevertheleſs had great failings; my Opinion is, that they ought to be forgiven in ſome things: For thô one ought to ſpeak nothing but what is true, yet he ought not to ſay all the Truth. *Quintus Curtius* might have let alone the Infamies he related of *Alexander*. There are ſome priviledg'd Heads which a body ought to reſpect; let us ſpeak of them handſom-

ly, and not irreverently: We may expoſe their Faults, but it muſt be in a way that does not ſcandalize their Dignity, nor hurt the Reſpect due to their Grandeur. *Tacitus* ſays ſo many dirty things of *Tyberius*, that *Boccalinus* cannot ſuffer him. That which *Lampridius* tells of the Emperours *Heliogabalus* and *Caracalla*, makes his *Hiſtory* contemptible; and *Platina* ſhews but little judgment in his manner of treating the *Popes*. All the World will not be of my ſide, but wiſe men will; and I am perſuaded, that what Merit ſoever there is in being ſincere, a man would render himſelf ridiculous to be ſo in all things. But, as an Author never praiſes well, unleſs he does it nicely, ſo he that beſtows his Commendation upon meaner Actions, and not upon thoſe which are eſſential, and which appear praiſeworthy, ſhall always find the Publick out of humour, becauſe it will never endure thoſe praiſes

ſes which it does not find juſtly beſtow'd: Therefore good Senſe adviſes never to praiſe, but by a ſincere account of praiſable Actions. * All the World knows the Adventure of *Ariſtobulus*, one of the Captains of *Alexander*, who read to him the *Hiſtory* of the Battel which that Prince fought againſt *Porus*. *Alexander*, who was then in his Barge upon *Hydaſpus*, enrag'd with the Flatteries of that *Hiſtorian*, ſnatch'd the Book out of his hands, and threw it into the River; adding, that he deſerv'd to be ſerv'd ſo too, for being ſo impudent as to praiſe him ſo ill, by attributing to him falſe Conqueſts, as if there had been want of true ones. This is very near the Morality I could wiſh in an *Hiſtorian*; or, at leaſt, it would be my Principle, in caſe I had the Fancy to write *Hiſtory*, and that I were of a Genius good enough for it. I would, in fine, be ſo modeſt, that there might appear

* *Luc.* de Conſcr. Hiſt.

pear Honeſty, and never Vanity in my Sentiments; which makes me to have no patience with the Extravagancy of that *Hiſtorian Photius* ſpeaks of, who preparing himſelf to write the *Hiſtory of Alexander*, promiſes, that his Style ſhall not be worſe than the Actions of his *Heroe*. After all is done, it makes a man loſe almoſt the Fancy of writing, if he has any Senſe, when he ſees the judgment *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* made of *Thucydides's Hiſtory*; for there is no judicious Author, but that Critick will make him tremble. Theſe are the Notions I got to my ſelf in reading *Hiſtories*. I am not ſo vain as to pretend to give them for Maxims: They are only thoughts, and perhaps but ill digeſted, which may become good by the good uſe that may be made of them. Here follow the Sentiments one may have upon the moſt conſiderable *Hiſtorians*.

XXVIII.

XXVIII.

Herodotus is the firſt who has given a reaſonable form to *Hiſtory*; and his merit is, to have led the way to others. His Style is pure and eloquent. * *Athenæus* praiſes him for the Charms of his Diſcourſe. His Subject is great and vaſt; for it compaſſes Nations, Kingdoms, Empires; the Affairs of *Europe* and *Aſia*. He is not very exact in what he ſays, becauſe he contains too much matter; but I find in him a ſincerity which is not very common, becauſe he uſes *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, his own Countreymen and Strangers, without any ſhew of Partiality. * I find *Plutarch* deals with him too rigorouſly, when he makes him to have an ill meaning in moſt part of his Conjectures; but it is only Envy and Revenge makes him uſe him ſo, becauſe he uſed ill his Countrey of *Bœotia*, in his

Judgment of Hiſtorians.

* Dulcis, candidus, fuſus *Herodotus. Fab.* l. 10. c. 1. *Athen.* l. 3.

* *Plutarch.* de malign. *Herod.*

his *Hiſtory*. * *Thucydides* is exact in his way of writing, faithful in things he relates, ſincere, and not ſway'd by Intereſt: he has Greatneſs, Nobleneſs, Majeſty in his Style; he is always ſtrict, but his ſtrictneſs has nothing but what is great in it: The Truth is, that his Subject is leſſer, and more limited than that of *Herodotus*. It is only through a Spirit of Partiality, that *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* prefers *Herodotus* before *Thucydides*, the firſt being his Countreyman: For my own part, I find him the moſt accompliſh'd *Hiſtorian* among the *Greeks*. *Xenophon* is pure in his Language, Natural, agreeable in his Compoſition; his Mind is eaſie, rich, full of a deep knowledge, a clear imagination, a juſt turn; but he is neither great nor elevated. Good Manners are not always well obſerv'd in his *Hiſtory*, where he makes ignorant and brutiſh People ſpeak like Philoſophers. *Cicero* tells us, that *Scipio* could not part

* Laudatur ab omnibus ut rerum explicator ſincerus & gravis; hujus nemo neque verborum, neque ſententiarum gravitatem imitatur. *Cic.* de opt. Orat.

part with him, when once he had him in his hands: *Longinus* gives it as his Character, That he conceiv'd things happily. After all is done, he is a well-accompliſhed *Hiſtorian*; and it was by the reading of his *Hiſtory*, that *Scipio* and *Lucullus* became ſo great Captains. *Polybius* diſcourſes well; he is provided with good and fine Materials, but he does not manage them ſo well as the others I ſpoke of but now: He ought, for all that, to be prais'd for the Idea *Brutus* had of him, who at the height of his Misfortunes, did paſs whole Nights in the reading and ſtudying of them. His Deſign is not ſo much to write an *Hiſtory*, as an Inſtruction how to govern a Countrey, as he himſelf ſays at the end of his Firſt Book; and he leaves there, in a manner, the Character of an *Hiſtorian*, which obliges him to make a kind of an Apology in the beginning of the Ninth Book, about his way of writing *Hiſtory*: his Style is much neglected. *Dionyſius*

us *Halycarnaſſæus* ſhews, in his Book of *Roman* Antiquities, a deep Senſe, Learning and Conduct, which is not common; he is exact, diligent and judicious, truer than *Livy*, and of great weight: But, to conclude, he is very tedious in his Speeches. *Diodorus Siculus* is a man of great Character; but he contains too many things, pretending to make an Abridgement of *Philiſtus*, of *Timæus*, of *Calliſthenes*, of *Theopompus*, and others. *Philo* and *Joſephus* are Authors of an extraordinary Eloquence: They were both *Jews*, who had too great a deſire to pleaſe *Pagans*, by accommodating themſelves like Slaves to their Humour and Taſte. *Arrian* does but Copy *Xenophon*, and is an affected Imitator of his ways: he has made Seven Books of the Conqueſts of *Alexander*, as *Xenophon* did of *Cyrus*'s: *Appianus* dabbl'd in all the *Greek Hiſtorians*, and with that hodge-podge has made to himſelf a Style which reſembles no bodies. *Scaliger* calls him the Thief of *Hiſtories*; he took

took the beſt of his Book out of *Plutarch's*: but, after all, there is in him a vaſt deal of matter. *Dio Caſſius* crack'd his Credit with almoſt every body, becauſe of the extraordinary things which he writes without any diſtinction: for inſtead of cleaving ſtrictly to the Truth, he runs from the very appearance of it, in that place of the 66th Book of his *Hiſtory*, where he ſays, That *Veſpaſian* cur'd a blind man by ſpitting upon his Eyes. *Procopius* is exact in what he ſays, becauſe he accompanied *Beliſarius* in the Wars, and was an Eye-witneſs of his great Actions: but he is too dry in his *Hiſtory* of *Perſia*, which looks more like a Journal than *Hiſtory*. He ſatisfied his own Fancy by writing that private *Hiſtory*; but his Modeſty was great in his ſuppreſſing it: for the thing which he took pains to hide during his Life, was made publick after his Death; wherein he is not altogether inexcuſable. Moſt part of thoſe who have written the *Hiſtory*

ſtary of *Byzantium*, either took Copies one by another, as *Agathias*, *Cedrenus*, *John Curopalatus*; or are not very exact; and they come nothing near the Dignity, the Nobleneſs, the Diſtinguiſhing, and the Faithfulneſs of the Ancient *Greeks*. * Amongſt the *Latins*, *Saluſt* looks great, exact, of an admirable Judgment. No body ever expreſs'd the ſenſible, exact, ſevere Style of *Thucydides*, better than he. † He is ſtiff ſometimes in his Expreſſions, but not inſipid: his being ſo ſhort, makes him leſs clear: His Method is good, and he gives weight to every thing he ſays: His Thoughts are always fine, thô his Manners be bad; declaring always in Commendation of Virtue, and Deteſtation of Vice. I find him a little too peeviſh with his Countrey, and ill affected to his Neighbour; but, for all that, he is a very great man. *Cæſar* had the fineſt way of expreſſing himſelf that ever was. Pedants are in the right in admiring him, for the inimitable purity

* Subtiliſſimus brevitatis artifex *Saluſtius*, proprietatum in verbis retinentiſſimus. *Gell.*

† *Saluſtius* homo nequam, ſed graviſſimus alienæ luxuriæ objurgator. *Lact.* l. 2. de falſ. Rel.

rity of his Style; but I ſtill admire him the more, for the exactneſs of his Senſe, no body having ever written better. He is almoſt the only Author that is free from Impertinencies. He ſpeaks of himſelf but as an indifferent body, and nothing diſagrees in the wiſe Character he has taken. It is true, that he is not altogether an *Hiſtorian*, but it is true too, that he is a fine Model to write *Hiſtory* by. It is a great Honour for that incomparable Author, that *Henry* the Fourth of *France*, and *Lewis* the Fourteenth have buſied themſelves in the tranſlating of his *Hiſtory* of the *Gaules*. *Livy* is the moſt accompliſh'd of all, becauſe he has all the great Parts of an *Hiſtorian*; the Imagination fine, the Expreſſion noble, an exact Senſe, with an admirable Eloquence. None but great Idea's come in his Mind; he fills the Imagination of his Readers with what he ſays: that way he gains People's Hearts, and moves their Souls;

and he has the greateſt Genius for *Hiſtory*, and is one of the greateſt Maſters of Eloquence that ever was. * I do not apprehend *Aſinius Pollio*'s meaning, who attributes him a Countrey Air, which ſmells of *Lombardy*. His great ſtrength is, to make People taſte what he ſays, by drawing his Readers to his own Sentiments, by infuſing into their Minds his Fears and his Hopes, giving them all his Paſſion by the Art he has of moving the moſt hidden Springs of Hearts. *Tacitus* deſcribes things in a way quite different from others; but he ſticks too cloſe to great things, to avoid falling into ſmall ones, which ought not to be neglected. His thoughts are good, but he is not always happy enough to expreſs himſelf neatly. He is too much a Philoſopher. He ſpeaks highly of every thing: If mens Deſtiny was in his hands, he could not ſpeak otherwiſe: and he moralizes always upon other People's fooliſhneſs: and that he may ſpare no body,

* In *Tito Livio putat* ineſſe *Pollio* quandam *Patavinitatem. Fab.* l. 8. c. 1.

body, he detracts from all Mankind. How many Spirits has he ſpoil'd by the deſire of ſtudying Politicks, which he inſpir'd ſo many People with, and which is the vaineſt of all Studies: 'Tis that ruin'd ſo many *Spaniards*, as *Antonio Perez*, and ſo many *Italians*, as *Machiavel*, *Ammirato*, and others. It is only by the fineneſs of his Style, that this laſt pleaſes ſo much thoſe of ſtrong minds, and ſo little thoſe that are not ſo; for he gives diſtaſts by the ſubtilty of his Diſcourſes and Reflections. He is ſo obſcure in his Expreſſions, that a man muſt be extreamly vers'd in his Style, to know how to unwrap his Thoughts. * His manner of Criticiſing is fine of it ſelf; but his conſtant cenſuring of all things makes it become courſe. He is elevated, becauſe his thoughts are always high mounted: It is only that way that he impoſes; and it is not ſo much to pleaſe, and to inſtruct, that he writes, as to make himſelf be admir'd: he has ſomething extraordinary, which cauſes

* Evenit nonnunquam & aliquid granda inveniat, qui ſemper quærit quod nimium eſt. *Fab.* l. 2. c. 13.

People to excuſe moſt part of his failings. But there are ſo many things to be ſaid of that Author, good and bad, that there is no end in ſpeaking of him. It is a kind of Wit, which is of uſe only for a ſhew; that does not fit the ordinary Commerce of men. *Quintus Curtius* deſerves praiſes for his being ſincere: he ſays what is good and bad in *Alexander*, and never ſuffers the Merits of his *Heroes* to prevent him. If there be any thing to be found fault with in his *Hiſtory*, it is, that it is too nicely finiſh't. But for all that, he did excell in the Deſcriptions of Manners, which he has done with an Air agreeable and natural. That Character of Perfections which is found in thoſe great Men, was loſt in the following Ages. *Juſtin*, who became a Compiler, thinking to erect himſelf to an *Hiſtorian*, does only touch things as he paſſes by. He knows a great deal; he ſays things ſenſibly; and he collected many Actions, which otherwiſe might have been loſt. Moſt part of

of the Authors; *Hiſtoriæ Auguſtæ*, fix'd their Minds to write Lives; as *Plutarch* and *Herodian* amongſt the *Greeks*, *Suetonius* and *Cornelius Nepos* among the *Latins*; and ſo loſt the Character of *Hiſtorians*. There came nothing after that, but ſingle *Chroniclers*, *Copiers*, *Compilers*, and ſuch whoſe Names were known by a courſe knowledge they gave of their Ages, to whom the Planet of *Hiſtory* was not very favourable, having nothing fine nor reaſonable in them. There was but little Truth found in the Modern *Greeks*, who became Viſionaries, and related extraordinary Adventures, to pleaſe their own Fancies. The Love of Study, which flouriſh'd again in the late Ages, reviv'd again a number of good and ſenſible *Hiſtorians*, who by ſtudying Ancient Authors, and ruling themſelves by them, gain'd more Reputation than their Predeceſſors Among thoſe that excell'd then, that which is peculiar to *Commines*, is, that he wrote with good ſenſe and ſincerity. *Paulus Æmilius* ſpeaks purely, but is ſuperficial:

Pau-

Paulus Jovius follows only his Paſſion and his Intereſt: *Machiavel* is exact enough in his *Hiſtory* of *Florence*; his Wit carries it above his Judgment in the reſt. He does not do Juſtice entirely to *Caſtruccio Caſtrucci*, whom he treats as an Enemy of his Countrey. *Mariana*, in his *Hiſtory* of *Spain*, was out-done by no Modern, neither for the Greatneſs of the Deſign, nor for the Nobleneſs of the Style. *Buchanan* is a little too much like a Slave in his imitating of *Livy*. He ſtole from the Ancients what he has that is good. He writes very ſenſibly, yet has not his thoughts elevated. His long Quotations in the Third Book, do not pleaſe every body, no more than the large account he gives in the Second Book of the Notion of the Countrey he ſpeaks of. The *Germans* have vaſt Projects about their *Hiſtories*, and nothing reduc'd into the Natural Order, which an exact Deſign requires. One may find in moſt part of the *Spaniards* a Spirit of Partiality for their Countrey, which renders them much ſuſpected.

pected. The *Italians* are rich in particular *Hiſtories* of the ſeveral States which compoſe *Italy*; but they have no compleat Body of *Hiſtory*. There begins to appear amongſt us ſome beams of hopes to have ſome accompliſhed *Hiſtorian*, by the approbation the Publick gives to thoſe that write now.

FINIS.